PLACE AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE WORKS OF BRIAN FRIEL AND SEAMUS HEANEY

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SUMMARY

Place and Displacement in the Works of Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney

This thesis seeks to locate Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney within a post-colonial and postmodern era of writing which is concerned with the problematising of an effective identifying relationship between self and place. In the first instance, the study is interested in the response of these two writers, within the literary forms of drama and poetry, to the recurrence of sectarian and neo-colonial conflict in Northern Ireland since the nineteen sixties. Obliged to deal with history as a category, their art emphasises the contest for the naming of people and terrain which has taken place within language, writing and discourse.

But place for these writers is not only historical and material, it is sensual, familiar and parochial. The structural and narrative shape of the drama and poetry is that of a lived, intimate, non-literate engagement with the local particulars of place and a learned, artistic life which offers insight into that existence. The thesis is interested in the nature of this modern form of division: the detached, educated mind 'making strange' the ordinary assimilated life. Men of rural origins who pursue pedagogical and artistic vocations do not only offer educations in displacement, but contrarily, realise that language, education and writing generate displacement, uprooting the individual, and creating divisions in experience and consciousness.

It is the syncretism of this personal experience of rural place, and of parochial and metropolitan forms of education and culture, with the historical colonial reformation of the Irish landscape through a culture of modernity which constitutes the main focus and major contribution in understanding of this thesis to the contemporary literature and society of Northern Ireland.

ABBREVIATIONS

Death of a Naturalist - DN

Door into the Dark - DD

Wintering Out - WO

Stations - S

North - N

Field Work - FW

Sweeney Astray - SA

Station Island - SI

The Haw Lantern- HL

Seeing Things - ST

INTRODUCTION

Place has been a central preoccupation of the literature written within the island of Ireland in the twentieth-century, be it the Irish Free State, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland or Ulster. As Seamus Deane points out in *Celtic Revivals*, the very difficulty of naming the land in both literature and politics is a symptom of a colonial history which is still being worked through.[1] In his essay 'A Sense of Place', Seamus Heaney registers the re-evaluation of place occurring in Ireland in the move towards Irish Independence in the early twentieth century which resulted in the literature and theatre of the Irish Literary Renaissance and a 'determination to found or re-found a native tradition'.[2] In 'Plays Peasant and Unpeasant' Brian Friel, too, directs attention towards the generic peasant passion for land which informs Irish life and which inspired drama in the epoch of the Irish Literary Theatre.[3] Yeats and Synge are conceived by Heaney as responding to a historical sense of place worked upon by materialist and rationalist forms of colonisation, refurbishing a legendary, folkloric sense of Irish place, recompoing a *Weltanschauung*, a world-view or outlook for a devastated people.

Whereas Yeats is perceived to be in possession of a conscious cultural and political purpose in 'his hallowing of Irish regions',[4] Patrick Kavanagh's life and poetry of the fifties and sixties represent for Heaney 'the profound importance of the parochial'[5] abjuring any national purpose. Taking the opening line to Kavanagh's poem 'Epic', 'I have lived in important places', Heaney invokes Kavanagh's parish of *Iniskeen*, where the County Monaghan poet was born and lived for the first thirty years of his life, as a model for the intimate and quotidian response to place.[6] Brian Friel's introduction to Charles

McGlinchey's *The Last of the Name*, 'Important Places', also cites Kavanagh's opening lines from 'Epic'. He refers to Kavanagh in order to illustrate how Meentagh Glen 'is an important place, not of itself but because an astute man observed it and his observations bestowed an importance on it, elicited an importance from it. And that simultaneous bestowing and eliciting is the act of art'.[7] In this vision Meentagh Glen is representative of a 'national place', evocatively personal and intimate in its portrayal.

In the contemporary literature of Ireland, north and south, there are many compelling geographies of place, biographical and fictional, which might be considered both as modern expression of an older impulse in the culture to relate intimately to place and as modern impulse to respond to a divided sense of place. John.B.Keane evokes the life of south-west Ireland through a sense of regional specificity setting *The Field*, for example, in the townland of Carraigthomond. The title of Tom Murphy's play, *Bailegangaire* (1985), is taken from the Irish 'place without laughter' and that of John Montague's volume, *The Rough Field* (1972), is taken from the Gaelic *garbh achaidh*: 'the poem begins where I began myself, with a Catholic family in the townland of Garvaghey, in the county of Tyrone, in the province of Ulster'.[8] Each of these locales bears the weight of a disintegrated past in their place-name, each a sign of colonialist usurpation.

Townlands such as Glengormley where 'By/ Necessity, if not choice' Derek Mahon once lived, or Tom Paulin's Desertmartin 'Between Draperstown and Magherfelt' where 'This bitter village shows the flag' of Unionism, further illustrate the interest with parochial place amongst contemporary Ulster writers. Another peer of Heaney and Friel, Paul Muldoon, makes play with traditional forms of Irish journey such as the *Immrama* and *Mael Duin*, registering through a postmodernist pastiche of traditional forms the late twentieth-century experience of cultural instability and uprootedness in Ireland. Seamus Heaney

and Brian Friel's concerns for the condition of land, landscape, terrain and geography similarly constitute a response to the crisis in a material political history and twentieth-century metaphysics, artistically mediated by the close scrutiny of Ulster and Irish place.

An Ulster Sense of Place

Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney are writers who emerge out of the political, geographical, cultural and metaphysical conditions contingent upon a settlement of Irish demands for Independence and the associated partition of the country implemented in 1920. Brian Friel was born in Killyclogher, close to the town of Omagh, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland on 9 January 1929. Seamus Heaney was born on the Mossbawn farm, County Derry, Northern Ireland on April 1939. Thus numbered amongst the first generations to be born into a partitioned Ireland, the formative childhood experiences of both the dramatist and the poet are enacted within a newly-made and highly significant marginal space of 'British' culture adjacent to a territorial border on which the contradictions of British/Irish identities are highly visible.

In his lecture 'Among Schoolchildren' Heaney recalls the imposing map of Ireland which hung on the wall of his school classroom on which the separation of the Republic and the six counties was so marked:

> ...with the border emphasised by a thick red selvedge all the way from Lough Foyle to Carlingford Lough...a vestigially bloody marking [which] halted the eye travelling south and west.[9]

The vivid, blood-red appearance of the boundary line which polices the boy's perception makes it clear that the partition border between Ulster and Eire is not only a line printed on a map but also a schismatic line of conflict imprinted on the mind. Heaney's childhood memory illustrates his claims in 'Place and Displacement', that the geopolitical symbolism of the border was fully at work in the collective life of Northern Ireland and radically internalised within the

Ulster personality long before the recurrence of sectarian disruption in the late 1960s when the deeply-laid contradictions of an Irish national and British identity became acutely visible.[10]

This geographical and political partition is an overt sign of a more extensive and subtle fissuring on the poet's home ground of mid-Ulster and the Mossbawn hinterland where he spent the first eleven years of his life. The first of Heaney's collected essays in *Preoccupations* (1980) is entitled 'Mossbawn' and is constituted by a cartography which discloses the childhood genesis of Heaney's split linguistic and geographical inheritance which scores his poetic vision. Here, Heaney locates historical and political schism in the Ulster ground: 'the lines of sectarian antagonism and affiliation followed the boundaries of the land'.[11] In a subsequent essay 'Belfast', Heaney registers the fissuring of place-name which extends the historical knowledge of colonial division in geography and language:

> Our farm was called Mossbawn. *Moss*, a Scots word probably carried to Ulster by the Planters, and *bawn*, the name the English colonists gave to their fortified farmhouses. Mossbawn, the planter's house on the bog. Yet in spite of this Ordnance Survey spelling, we pronounced it Moss bann, and *bán* is the Gaelic word for white. So might not the thing mean the white moss, the moss of bog cotton? In the syllables of my home I see a metaphor of the split culture of Ulster.[12]

These cultural and geographical splits in language and landscape inform the summary poem of place, 'Terminus' in *The Haw Lantern*, an autobiographical poem which represents the Roman god of boundaries as the geographical sign under which Seamus Heaney's art is written.[13] The poem composes the writer as a double man, 'Is it any wonder when I thought/ I would have second thoughts?', made so by his schismatic native condition recorded in the divisions of the much contested, fought-over and transformed landscape.

Mossbawn sources and imprints Heaney's poetic vision of a landscape written on by historical force making the poetically-mediated place comparable in its literary significance to the fictional townland of rural Ballybeg in which

Friel locates many of his mature dramas. Friel's ancestry, family and personal history are every bit as scored by the splits and schisms of an Irish and Ulster history. A teacher himself and the son of a teacher, he was nonetheless the grandson of peasants who could neither read nor write and who were also native Irish speakers.[14] Divisions in orality and literacy, English and Gaelic, are laid down in Friel's own family, symptomatic of a larger public history.

Divisions in geography are also central to Friel's personal history. His father was born in Derry - to which his father's parents had migrated from Donegal - and his mother was a native of Glenties in the west of Donegal, embodying the contradictions in Irish identity which the partition of Ireland and the diminunition of Ulster from nine to six counties effected. Donegal, a historical province of Ulster, was allotted to the Republic while County Derry was apportioned to Northern Ireland. The family moved to Derry when Friel was aged ten and his adolescent and adult years as a teacher were spent in Derry. It later became the headquarters of the Field Day Theatre Company. Yet Donegal, where the young Friel spent many summer holidays[15] and to where he later migrated in 1966, also had a deep effect on his imagination. The fictive, generic village of Ballybeg which Friel's drama favours is situated in rural Donegal.

Thesis and Theory

Ulf Dantanus in *Brian Friel: A Study* notes that the divisional border between Britain and Ireland, Ulster and the Republic, and within the region of a nine-county Ulster itself, barely exists in Brian Friel's writing yet his whole *oeuvre* is marked by the itinerancy and exile of the displaced peoples of Ireland and by a noteworthy border mentality. Many of Friel's protagonists are like the characters of Samuel Beckett's tragi-comedies, wanderers, wayfarers, outlaws and emigrés, created so by the historical splits and modern tensions in society,

while leading authority figures of the indigenous culture such as Columba (*The Enemy Within*), Hugh O'Neill (*Making History*) and Hugh (*Translations*) are located historically in eras of schism and change, caught between what Richard Pine identifies as 'a known, secure, but receding heritage' and 'an unknown, beckoning future'.[16] Chapter I introduces the Ulster and Irish subject as outlaw and deviant in the modern urban landscapes of Ulster and the Republic.

Concerned specifically with Friel's most immediate responses to the renewed outbreak of sectarian and neo-colonial forms of violence in Ireland, *The Freedom of the City* (1972) and *Volunteers* (1975) dramatise a dialectics of identity in which the emplacement and displacement of the individual is recognisably conditioned by the space, institutions, roles and discourses of the modern state. Edward Soja's *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* exemplifies the critical perspective in the thesis upon the spatial and geographical mentality in contemporary literary consciousness, supported by Michel Foucault's descriptive terminology of *emplacement* and *displacement* drawn from his essay 'Of Other Spaces'.

Friel's urban dramas illustrate the developing awareness that the physical terrain is 'written on' not only by material structures but also are cognitively and linguistically mapped. The Judge in *Freedom of the City* and Dr King in *Volunteers* act ideologically and discursively as the political and cultural guardians of the urban space with the authority to author the historical past and to name society. The work of Michel Foucault upon power, knowledge and discourse provides the main theoretical perspective while Edward Said's *Orientalism* exemplifies a post-colonial view of how cultures, such as those of Ulster and Ireland, and the people who belong to them, are historically constructed by colonial discourse. The chief protagonists of these dramas, Skinner and Keeney, appear as examples of what Seamus Deane calls the 'theatricalised self'. In this aspect they resemble *homo ludens* whom Mikhail

Bakhtin describes in his critique of middle ages carnival in his introduction to *Rabalais and his World*, representing a critical vision which can discern how the peripheral Keeney and Skinner mark out the boundaries of discourse which regulate social mediation of the self by parodying and mocking official speech and its forms.

Chapter 2 marks Friel's return in the dramas around the turn of the 1980s to the rural site of Ballybeg and expands the idea of an Irish geography written on by a colonialist *Weltanschauung* and its associated institutions and discourses. Barnes and Duncan in *Writing Worlds* are mindful of the root meaning of geography as 'earth writing', from the Greek *geo*, meaning earth, and *graphien* meaning to write'.[17] Speaking of place and landscape in pre-colonial Australia in 'Spatial History', Paul Carter and David Malouf acknowledge that 'it's clear they are fully named, fully occupied and have their own spatial history - which is clearly the history given to them by the Aborigines'.[18] This view provides a referential paradigm for the colonial drama of *Translations* (1980). Using a Foucauldian vision of text and culture, M. Hamer's essay 'Putting Ireland on the Map' registers the rewriting of the Irish space by the invasive colonist: 'Masquerading as a process of systematic record, the mapping of Ireland was a prolonged act of cultural displacement and textual processing'.[19] *Translations* employs the map to chart the process of epistemological, discursive and political incorporation of the Gaelic-Irish. This raises to view the post-colonial theories that have arisen in contemporary literary criticism such as Ashcroft et al invoke in *The Empire Writes Back*: 'A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place'.[20]

Within a post-structuralist Derridean context, Friel can be observed extending his deconstruction of post-colonial Ireland and its geographical and discursive incorporation, linking Irish colonisation to the history and technology of writing and the institution of education. *The Communication Cord* (1983) is deconstructive of the counter-discourses which arose during the epoch of Independence. It is a linguistic project which Friel interpolates back into an earlier history. Chapter 3 deals with Friel's dramas of an historical Ireland poised on the threshold of two colonial conquests, that of Christianity in *The Enemy Within* (1957) and that of England in *Making History* (1989), the latter the epoch in which Cairns and Richards in *Writing Ireland* locate the modern origins of the *writing* of Ireland within an imperialist discourse and the emergence of resistive discourses.

Chapter 4 deals with Friel's dramas *Faith Healer* (1979) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990). These plays are concerned with examining the modern outcome for an Irish society which has moved with the tide of English colonialism and is moving with the tide of a pedagogic and commercial rationalism, offering a prognosis for intimate, local, parochial, pagan forms of life. The migrant figures of Frank Hardy, faith healer, and Gerry, Welsh itinerant, bear the dramatic weight of a disintegrated social, linguistic and metaphysical inheritance. In questioning English language and scientific ways of knowing that have gradually invaded being and beliefs in Ireland over the last several hundred years, Friel is implicated in contemporary anti-Enlightenment intellectual and social currents, expressed politically and metaphysically in ecology movements and intellectually in post-colonial and postmodernist deconstruction of the grand narratives of materialist progress.

Seamus Heaney's autobiographical and mythic forms of poetry complement Friel's social and historical dramas, providing a broader vision of the trials and tribulations of a modern Ulster Catholic *Weltanschauung* which is

under pressure at personal and political, parochial and metaphysical levels. The central trope of modernity in Heaney's work is the motor car which bears the poet in both a secular-material and existential form away from his 'native' home generating and symptomising a divided relationship to the originary, formative ground. Tony Pinkney asserts a commonly experienced modern relationship to the ground of origin: '*first* there is the familiar or 'automatised' relation to place and 'then supervening upon it..comes *ostranenie* or 'making strange'...a temporal engine of defamiliarisation'.[21] 'Making Strange' in *Station Island* records that very process of *ostranenie* which is built into the poet's vision of Mossbawn as originary place: the car-oriented, intellectual man with 'the travelled intelligence' in a dialectic relation to the country man 'unshorn and bewildered/ in the tubs of his wellington s'.

Chapters 5 and 6 analyse *Wintering Out* and *North* for their response to the sectarian and neo-colonial crisis re-emergent on Heaney's home ground, while simultaneously eliciting a view of the learned, educated man bringing to bear his intellectual and imaginative powers upon the lived, non-literate experience of place. Like Friel in his historical dramas, *Volunteers, Translations and Making History,* the main trope which Heaney employs in his earliest volumes is that of archaeology representing the excavation through language of the history which has framed and shaped the current round of conflict in Ulster. Using a Foucauldian theory of discourse, chapter 5 shows how *Wintering Out* deals with the matter of a colonial textual, discursive and linguistic politics; his reinvocation of folkloric and place-name mythologies (*dinnseanchas*) declare how the poet seeks to repossess his territory in troubled post-colonial times: 'My *patria*, my deep design/ To be at home/ In my own place and dwell within/ The proper name' ('An Open Letter').

Chapter 6 discloses how excavation is intensified in *North*. The poet digs into Viking and pagan histories and into bogland to reveal archaic erotic

and death drives amongst the battle and burial grounds of tribal Ireland. The poet produces bogland as a hieroglyph of the racial unconscious, the feminine-matrix and vowel of earth which texture and structure contemporary consciousness in Ulster. But as an 'artful voyeur' Heaney is increasingly self-critical about his artistic fascination with the bog and its resurrected bodies. The chapter illustrates Heaney's moral and psychological withdrawal from Mossbawn and its hinterland and from Belfast and his migration to the Republic of Ireland to become an *inner émigré*, like one of Friel's wayfarers, albeit literary.

Chapters 7 and 8 reckon with Heaney astray, abroad in a modern, post-colonial world. Uprooted, anxious, guilty, purgative and redemptive through *Field Work* (1979), *Sweeney Astray* (1983), *Station Island* (1984), *Haw Lantern* (1987) and *Seeing Things* (1991), the closing chapters map the journey of Heaney as the wayfarer artist. It is reckoned as a form of pilgrimage or quest, a psycho-mythological passage through infernal and purgatorial regions, and ascent into a placeless heaven - the corollary to the concrete existence within social and geographical place. This is finally the problematic condition of belonging that Friel's characters display, too, succinctly articulated by the wanderer protagonist Gerry in *Dancing at Lughnasa*: 'Maybe that's the important thing for a man: a named destination - democracy, Ballybeg, heaven'.

1. Seamus Deane, *Celtic Revivals*, p.13.

2. Seamus Heaney, 'The Sense of Place', in *Preoccupations*, pp.131-49 (p.135).

3. Brian Friel, 'Plays Peasant and Unpeasant', *Times Lit*erary *Supplement*, 17 March 1972 , 305-6 (p.306).

4. 'The Sense of Place', p.137.

5. 'The Sense of Place', p.137.

6. Seamus Heaney, 'From Monaghan to the Grand Canal', in *Preoccupations*, pp.115-30 (p.116).

7. Brian Friel, 'Important Places', in *The Last of the Name*, by Charles McGlinchey, pp.1-4 (p.4).

8. John Montague, *The Rough Field*, p.7.

9. Seamus Heaney, *Among Schoolchildren*, p.7.

10. Seamus Heaney, *Place and Displacement: Recent Poetry in Northern Ireland*, p.5.

11. Seamus Heaney, 'Mossbawn',in *Preoccupations*, pp.17-27 (p.20).

12. Seamus Heaney, 'Belfast', in *Preoccupations*, pp.28-37 (p.35).

13. Lieutenant Yolland in *Translations* also uses the place-name Termon, from Terminus, the god of boundaries, to register the schismatic nature of the Irish terrain in the locale of Ballybeg.

14. Richard Pine, *Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama*, p.13.

15. Brian Friel, 'Self-Portrait', *Aquarius*, 3 (1972), 17-22 (p.18).

16. Richard Pine, p.6.

17. Barnes, Trevor J., and James S.Duncan, eds, *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text, and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, p.1.

18. Paul Carter and David Malouf, 'Spatial History', *Textual Practice*, 3 (1989), 173-83 (p.174).

19. Mary Hamer, 'Putting Ireland on the Map', *Textual Practice*, 3 (1989), 184-201 (p.190).

20. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, pp.8-9.

21. Tony Pinkney, 'Space: The Final Frontier', *News From Nowhere*, 8 (1990), 10-27 (p.14).

CHAPTER 1: THE NARRATOR OF THE CITY

The concern for place as an arena and discourse as an agency within which Friel's protagonists experience a radical sense of displacement is discernible in the playwright's earliest dramas. *Philadelphia, Here I Come* (1964) generates a dialectic of presence and absence by splitting the protagonist Gar O'Donnel into his public and private personae. The sterile ritual languages and social roles of the official culture determine the limited nature and extent of Public Gar's presence in the Ballybeg landscape. Private Gar functions as the sphere of repression, where the young man's frustrated sexual, cultural and economic desires are acted out through an animated, profane and fantastical unofficial speech. As George O'Brien puts it: 'Private Gar...has no place in Ballybeg, he is the Gar who is in exile...He is the Gar who utters what Ballybeg unthinkingly, unfeelingly, unconsciously perhaps, consigns to silence'.[1]

Cass, too, in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, is an exile. But she has returned from America to an Ireland which has undergone a process of embourgeoisement in her absence. She is unable to live out her self-identity within the domestic roles and polite discourses which facilitate female presence in Irish bourgeois society. She experiences a form of internal exile by being placed in Eden House, an asylum for the unaccommodated and the unassimilated, where difference can either be remedied or regulated.

The radical dialectic of place and displacement in Friel's drama is subsequently catalysed by the outbreak of political dissent and violence in the province in Ulster in 1968. Commenting on the impact of the conflict within Friel's work, Richard Pine has said that to the 'extent to which the same war is

cerebral and semantic and cultural he [Friel] has made it the basis of everything he has written since 1969'.[2] As Friel's earliest responses to the outbreak of sectarian and neo-colonial violence in Ulster, *The Freedom of the City* (1973) and *Volunteers* (1975) are recognisable as pivotal dramas in the playwright's oeuvre. Following the precedence of Sean O'Casey's plays of the Irish city, Friel locates his foremost social dramas of the troubles in the cities of Derry and Dublin where the exercise of a neo-colonialist politics and a capitalist modernity operate most intensely. It is in these settings that the issues of place, speech, role and identity opened up in *Philadelphia Here I Come* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire* are given bolder treatment.

A Spatialised Mentalité

George O'Brien's comment that 'nothing prepares the student of Friel for *The Freedom of the City*' because there was no possible means of 'anticipating the events upon which it draws'[3] characterises the sea-change in Ulster's societal conditions and Friel's social drama around the turn of the seventies. Those events were the anti-internment civil rights march in Derry on 30th January 1972, known as Bloody Sunday, on which day thirteen protesters were shot and killed by soldiers of the British Army, and the subsequent Widgery Tribunal, the official investigation into the shootings which essentially 'exonerated the military from culpability'.[4] Out of the political and discursive turmoil of these events, Friel creates a drama of the city.

The city of Derry has special importance for Friel. In 'Two Playwrights with a Single Theme' he registers his residence in Derry for most of the years between 1939 - when aged ten he moved with his parents to the city - and 1967, at which point he migrated across the border to Donegal. It was in Derry that the playwright gained his deepest sense of difference, division and discrimination in Ulster. 'One was always conscious of discrimination', he declares, and is

particularly scathing of the 'tight and immovable Unionist regime'[5] which politically controlled the city through a process of gerrymandering. Dantanus claims that the clearest example of gerrymandering in the province of Ulster was to be seen in Derry: 'In 1966 an adult population of 30,376, made up of 20,102 Catholics and 10,274 Protestants, still returned Unionist-controlled corporations'.[6] It came as no surprise to Friel that Derry became a site of intense conflict and conflagration during the late sixties and seventies: 'Although the Civil Rights fires had been kindled in many places throughout the North, they burst into flames in Derry, because it was there the suppression was greatest'.[7] *The civil rights* movement and the Bloody Sunday protest configure the renewed contesting of territorial space by the Ulster Catholic population of Derry. Historical colonial conflict is being re-enacted in the condensed and concentrated setting of the urban landscape.

The changeful stage of *The Freedom of the City* travels across the urban space of Derry to illustrate the city as a politicised and territorialised landscape of power. Michel Foucault in 'Of Other Spaces' draws attention to the importance of space in contemporary history: 'The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space'.[8] Edward Soja as a postmodernist geographer has sought in *Postmodern Geographies* to assert 'a critical spatial perspective into contemporary social theory and analysis'[9] arguing that space is a condensation of the historical and the social. Under pressure from renewed forms of sectarian and neo-colonial oppression, Friel's drama puts the Guildhall and Tribunal Court to work within an ironic dialectical exchange, opening these spaces up to scrutiny as sophisticated political stages where authority produces and reproduces ideology and the semantics of space at the levels of the verbal and the written, the semiotic and the symbolic, the civic and the ritualistic.

Derry Guildhall, which functions as a refuge for three civil rights marchers fleeing from a demonstration which has been broken up by the security forces,

represents in the drama the centre and seat of Protestant Unionist power in the city. George Broadbent's semiotic analysis of architecture draws attention to the way in which buildings act not only as symbols but also producers of political ideology by drawing upon styles from the past.[10] Friel's stage-set duplicates the Guildhall and it is descriptively denoted as 'neo-Gothic' and 'Guildhall', provoking to view the period values of bourgeois Protestant Victorian municipality - when the hall was built - and the political and cultural values of the Medieval township, the semiotics of an English tradition. Ideologically, these eras offer images of powerful but benign paternalistic forms of civic authority. Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* argues that the meaning of material objects does not 'evolve from the 'nature' of things' but is produced within history by the systems of cultural practice and systems of language.[11] Put onto Friel's stage, the Guildhall of the realist Derry landscape becomes a facsimile which 'de-naturalises' the building and exposes the artifice of its physical and cultural construction in history.

As a further strategy of exposure, the drama takes the audience upon a conducted tour of the Guildhall, looking at the furnishings, decor and accoutrements for the manner in which they represent an iconic grammar of power and provide an elegant political stage for a self-aggrandising Unionism. Materials of oak and leather aesthetically and substantively signify solidity, strength, elegance and eminence. The magnitude of the furnishings, the 'large' conference table, the 'grand' baroque chair and the oak panels extending to 'ceiling height' signify the dignified grandiosity which attaches to civic authority. Traditional baroque artistry and the craftsmanship of the woodcarvings iterate prestige and refinement. Skinner's mimicry of Guildhall meeting and investiture both represents and parodies Protestant Unionist political rites, pageantry and dress as the ritual fabric of the political theatre of Londonderry Unionism. The materiality of the Derry Guildhall is deconstructed in the play to expose the architecture, interior decor and furnishings and civil practices as functions of the political and the ideological, a theatre around

and in which value and authority is ritually and emblematically produced and reproduced in quotidian life and in public consciousness.

In Soja's terms, the Guildhall environs and ethos constitute a *spatialised mentalité*[12] in which space is a container of history, for as he argues the 'making of history is entwined with a social production of space': temporality and spatiality constellate in the urban geography.[13] Friel's stage-set releases for scrutiny the myths of a Protestant history which have been most formative and most deeply internalised within the structures of Ulster Protestant spaces of identity. Derry's walled town was built by planters in 1614 and in the period of the Williamite wars in 1688-90, they held out for the Protestant William of Orange against the Catholic King James II. The ceremonial sword and ancient musket on display in the Guildhall are cultural artefacts pertaining to medieval monarchical rituals of investiture and the Williamite defence of Protestant tradition in Ireland. The musket commemorates the victory of William of Orange over the Stuart monarchy, its label reads 'Muskets used by Williamite garrison besieged by Jacobite army'.

Culturally mobilising the historical signs of militarism and settlement, the drama divulges the symbolic, ideological and historical linkage in Protestant Unionism between God, Church, King and British State. The Guildhall's stained-glass window features as a Unionist emblem of a political and religious Protestantism allied to English kingship and the British state: 'Presented to the citizens of Londonderry by the Hon. Irish Society to commemorate the visit of King Edward VII in July 1903'. The portrait of Sir Joshua Hetherington MBE iconically illustrates the affinities that the Protestant Unionist political order maintains with the idea of service to the British Crown and Empire endorsed by the Union Jack which hangs on one side of the Guildhall door on Friel's stage.

'Discourse is the Power to be Seized'

Louis Althusser in his essay 'On Ideology and Ideological Apparatus' distinguishes between an *ideological state apparatus* which is entrusted with the ideational regulation of existing power relations, and the *repressive state apparatus* that 'functions by violence'.[14] From this reading of society, the Guildhall and its symbolic, mythic and ritual structures partake of the ideational sphere of the ideological state apparatus. The 'security forces' which marshal the civil rights demonstration and lay siege to the Guildhall containing the wretched civil rights marchers partake of the repressive sphere of the state apparatus, described by Conor Cruise O'Brien as 'the more antique and atavistic parts of the repertoire of legitimation'.[15] In the drama of violence, the dispersal of the civil rights demonstration, the marshalling of the RUC and British Army and the deaths of the three civil rights renegades, the play manifests the failure of the ideological and political apparatus and the invocation of the repressive forces in official society.

In Althusser's analysis the Tribunal Court falls into the category of a state apparatus poised between the ideological and the repressive which serves to police the limits of ideology. The sight of the British Tribunal Judge located throughout the play behind the 'battlements of the Guildhall' serves to endorse the imagery of a British colonialist stronghold and the embattled defence it offers to Unionist political rule. The constitution of the Tribunal Court - a transient political theatre which functions as an emergency form of governmental power - represents a British intervention within the ideological sphere and within language into the crisis generated by a failure in Unionist forms of consensus. The Tribunal represents an officially constructed and sanctioned form of legal and government authority, 'a court of enquiry appointed by Her Majesty's Government'. The Judge who authorises proceedings is invested with an institutional and ideological authority which allows him to watch over and interpret the discourse surrounding political events, virtually without question. Foucault's hypothesis in 'The Order of

Discourse' argues that knowledge is produced by the social-system through the regulation of language by forms of selection, exclusion and domination:

> In every society the production of discourse is controlled, organised, redistributed, by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its materiality.[16]

In Foucault's terms, the Tribunal is a sign of power institutionalising itself in order to reinforce the discursive truths which are the instruments of its power. It is an exemplification of Foucault's maxim of the political: 'Discourse is the power to be seized'.[17]

In outlining court procedures, the Judge represents the process of regulation of discursive production by social authority. He announces: 'Our only objective is to form an objective view...a fact-finding exercise'. The proposition advanced here is that there is a domain of objectivity and fact in which a value-free independent reality is realisable. Coward and Ellis in *Language and Materialism* assert that structuring of language is 'not objective, but conceals a process of reproduction of relations of unequal power'.[18] In order to describe the activity of the security forces the Judge is exploiting an empiricist discourse which includes in its expression a strategy of masking whereby the system ordering meaning is rendered invisible. As Friel's double plot unfolds, the drama of the marcher's deaths and the Tribunal account of those deaths, the ironic interplay between narratives serves to expose the way in which objectivity is an ideological subjectivity embedded in its own authoritative fictions. Fact is founded upon value-judgements whose selection is tied to the universe of British power.

The Judge sets further limits on the discourse by circumscribing the temporal parameters of the events under investigation: 'Our only concern is with the period of time when these three people came together'. This precludes immediately the economic, social and political circumstances surrounding events which Friel's own dramatic narrative includes. The Judge proceeds to limit, too, the interpretative

options open to the court by offering two possible conclusions to the court's narrative: they are either 'callous terrorists' or protagonists involved in a 'misguided scheme'. Both conclusions anticipate a justification of the security forces' actions before the court has investigated the circumstances.

That the Tribunal's activity is a fictional production becomes more apparent in the process of identifying the arguments acceptable to the Tribunal. There is what the Judge calls a 'conflict between the testimony of the security forces...and civilian witnesses' about whether the civil rights protesters were armed or not. The Brigadier's statement that 'they emerged from the Guildhall firing', the supportive statements of eight soldiers and four policemen that they were fired upon, and the forensic evidence of Dr Winbourne's paraffin tests are accepted as more credible points of evidence than those of the priest, Father Brosnan, who 'insists that none of the three was armed', and the evidence of the journalist's photographs showing an absence of weapons. Ultimately, of course, it is the parallel narrative of events at the Guildhall which testifies most obviously and ironically to the falsehood, fabrications and misinterpretations of the security forces, the professional experts and the judge, and discloses the fictional excess of truth.

In these terms Friel's drama profiles the court drama as a linguistic and textual event. The court is a performative ritual which stages a legal discourse and produces a definitive textual narrative, the Tribunal Report, equivalent in 'real' history to the Widgery Report. Foucault directs attention to the production of text in culture, representing ideology as an 'unwritten' primary text which can be routinely and ritualistically actualised in the secondary texts of culture and society. The Tribunal Report which counsels in favour of the security forces account of events is what Foucault terms 'repetition in disguise'. Unmasked, 'the new thing here lies not in what is said but in the event of its return'.[19] While the special Tribunal Court institutionalises the ideological intervention of state power into the political crisis, it is defamiliarised in Friel's theatre as a 'staged' activity in which

power enacts and speaks itself. The Tribunal's objective is thus a recursive one: to do no less than reproduce its own superior position in the hierarchy of power and discourse.

That the drama enters into the material and discursive conditions of which it speaks is testified to by the response of the English press. The *Daily Express* condemned the drama for the way 'its bias against the English robs it of its potential power'[20] while the *Sunday Express* accused the work of being 'engaged in a Celtic propaganda exercise'.[21]

'All The World's A Stage'

Edward Soja's perspective upon the materiality of space and its dynamic operation opens up to view the complex making of political oppression in Northern Ireland which in *The Freedom of the City* is a configuration of political, judicial and military institutions and discourses. The counter-discourses of a Catholic and Republican Nationalism are given shape in the drama by reifying the ideational political and religious apparatus in the roles of balladeer and priest whose 'performative space' is street and church, respectively. The balladeer's language is literally performative; he writes and sings a patriotic ballad about the Guildhall siege. But its creativity is limited to its reproduction of the anti-imperialist themes of historical nationalist discourse already present in popular Irish balladry. Irish patriots are pitted against the 'saxon bullet', the civil rights protagonists are enlisted in a canon of republican heroes, Wolfe Tone, Pearse and Connolly, legendary figures of the 1798 and 1916 rebellions against British rule. Politically emotive motifs of sacrifice and martyrdom enter into the evocative song: 'Their blood now stains the Guildhall pavements, a cross stands there for all to see'.

The balladeer's mythologising is ideologically supplemented by the discourse and rituals of the Catholic Church. The priestly sermonising is another instance of ritual social performance within the context of the Catholic Mass. Drawing upon

nationalist tropes of sacrifice to the motherland of Ireland the priest, too, reworks images and themes of communal sacrifice. The language and action of political principle is elided with the language and action of church principle: 'They died for their beliefs. They died for their fellow citizens...They sacrificed their lives so that you and I...might be rid of that iniquitous yoke'. The total nationalist perspective functions to edit out the economic and class basis for the civil rights movement, and while Friel's criticism of this nationalist practice is never declamatory in a way that it is with British and Ulster political practice, the play, nevertheless, offers a critique of its narrowing ideological discourse.

The nationalist 'theatricality' extends to the funeral ceremony. Amongst the cortege are Cardinal Primate and Taioseach and the 'entire Dail and Senate' and the heroising discourse of the RTE commentator reproduces the heroic idiom of Irish nationhood. From this perspective TV, too, represents a form of domestic theatre which colludes in mediating the spectacles of identity and conflict: the play of society mediated through the imagery and discourse of the medium. O'Kelly the television newsman is an interpretive figure who speaks through prescriptive discourses. His rhetorical language notably amplifies the circumstances upon which he reports. In reporting the siege of the Guildhall by the British forces he exaggerates in terms of both numbers and emotional linguistic coding. He speaks of a 'three thousand strong' civil rights meeting and of 'fifty armed gunmen' in the Guildhall. His discourse is to a great extent congruous with the Army Press Officer who talks of 'a band of terrorists' and estimates 'up to forty persons are involved' in the Guildhall takeover. When O'Kelly later reports on the funeral of the same three figures, he switches his discourse to a more sombre, sentimental, heroic nationalism which befits the Catholic nationalism of the Irish Republic.

From this perspective it is worth recognising how the Widgery Report itself is less a text read than a text mediated by Press and Television. Liz Curtis's book *Ireland: The Propoganda War* deals with the Widgery Report as a textual media

event. She notes that 'bland' as were the Widgery findings, they were in their turn 'whitewashed for presentation to the British public'.[22] She comments that the 'first front page reports scarcely referred to even the limited criticism Widgery had made, let alone offered a serious probe of the report'.[23] She is suggesting that the media colluded and conspired with the distorting conclusions of the Widgery Report. This view sees the Press as a fourth estate, itself a representational medium which filters original activity, speech and text through its own visual, verbal and ideological codes. By putting the TV Newsman on the stage, the play again exhibits a tendency to defamiliarise the production and reception of television news, to expose the role-play and speech-play of the media and to realise its discursive and ideological collusions at the level of political structure and discursive formations.

Friel's theatre of the metropolis amounts to a metaphor for political society. But it is a theatre in which each social or political group discovers itself not only in its difference but also as a production: 'The function of theatre is to show that all the world's a stage'.[24] Society in its institutional, spatial and discursive formations is recognised as 'constructed', 'produced', 'staged' and 'scripted'. In this way, the play raises with the audience the issue of linguistic representation as a means of apportioning reality, codifying value and legitimising social action.

Exemplary of this condition is how judge, priest, newsman, balladeer, sociologist, expert witness, soldier, officer, all linguistically codify the protesters according to their own ideological dispositions. In the eyes of the British soldiery they are 'fuckin yobbos', for the Judge, Army Officers and Pressmen they are 'callous terrorists', 'misguided' protesters and 'armed gunmen'. In the eyes of the Catholic population they are patriotic heroes and sacrificial martyrs. Dodds, the sociologist, considers them victims of 'the subculture of poverty'. The 'staging' of public discourse in which no one perspective coincides with another represents a linguistic determinism in which the speech-act is itself determined by the social location, role and status of the speaker. Distinct from the ideology of 'free speech',

the drama exemplifies Foucault's hypothesis about an order of discourse in which 'not all the regions of discourse are equally open and penetrable'.[25] The imposition of roles on speaking subjects and the rights and restrictions of access are the regulating factors within the society of speech.

The Theatre of the Self

The identities or roles of the three protagonists in the play, Skinner, Lily and Hegarty are constituted by public ideologies and discourses which are also intersected by a private thesaurus of experience and self-image. Michael Hegarty's interpellation[26] appears as a compound of working-class conditions and a broadly bourgeois liberal ideology which emanates in a series of contradictions in behaviour, attitudes and aspirations. The materialist Marxist discourse of the sociologist lecturer, Dodds, provides an economic and political framework for interpreting the disposition of the protestors. Read through Dodds' economic codes, Hegarty is a victim of bourgeois capitalist practice. Currently unemployed, he has been made redundant on two occasions, because of recession and merger. His participation in the civil rights march is to protest against policies on housing and unemployment, expressing admiration for the value of solidarity: 'And that was really impressive all those people marching...all shoulder to shoulder'. Contrarily, Hegarty expresses middle-class aspirations, entering committedly into the capitalist values of technology and money, studying economics, business administration and computer science at college.

His belief in a non-violent politics is fixed in the value-laden vocabulary of the dominant social order, which works to exclude or demean organised violent or threatening political action by inscribing it within a speech of ignorant or wilful lawlessness: 'hooligan element', 'trouble-maker', 'vandal'. This discourse of the civilian is expanded in the language of propriety which Hegarty persistently uses to value modes of action and behaviour. His vocabulary is characterised by words

which carry a weight of moral and social accountability: 'respect', 'decency', 'dignified' and 'responsibility' which cumulatively register a suggestively liberal or conservative description of civilised behaviour responsive to the values of the dominant social order. In the context of the repressive conditions in Northern Ireland, Hegarty's bourgeois liberal discourse is able to assert a dignified self-identity.

Hegarty's benevolent idealism, however, lacks insight into the darker side of official society, the committedly repressive element of social hierarchy which rejects principles of compassion for principles of power. His refusal to apportion responsibility to the security forces for the violence at the civil rights meeting or to admit the possibility of aggressive reprisal for his presence in the Guildhall is mocked for its naivety by his violent death and the fictions of the Tribunal. He dies a bewildered man. The liberal humanism of Hegarty is portrayed as an illusory romantic vision which neglects the way in which the values of language act as a blind for the unprincipled use of state power.

Lily, too, is profiled as an interpellated figure in Friel's political theatre of social identities. At the material level, she epitomises the socio-economic difficulties of 'the subculture of poverty': large family, poor housing conditions, unemployed husband and low-paid cleaning work. At the discursive level, she is inscribed by paternalistic ideologies of religion and class. Her language refracts the masculine symbolic order of Catholicism, miraculous medal, the Sacred Heart, Stations of the Cross, the Nazarene Ceilidh Band, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The appelation of 'chairman' by which she names her husband accommodates the emotional paternalism of Catholic church and capitalist iconography. At the same time, Lily experiences herself as outside the political sphere 'everybody else marching and protesting about politics and stuff'. It is only at the point of death that Lily achieves an epiphanic understanding of her life, recognising how she had been intellectually alienated from engagement with life:

> ...life had eluded me because never once in my forty-three years had an experience, an event, even a small unimportant happening been isolated, and assessed, and articulated.

Lily embodies the most fully subjected and disempowered identities in the society, female, working-class, Catholic and Irish. Her femininity, sexuality and desire are subjugated in the corresponding roles of wife, mother, cleaner, supplicant. If she protests successfully then the whole system of hierarchical power is in jeopardy.

The Theatricalised Self

Skinner, an unemployed working-class Irish Catholic, refuses the roles which the capitalist structures of Irish society construct for him. Parentless and unmarried, expelled from grammar school, of no fixed abode, without employment or dole, he repudiates the available class roles and identities of the capitalist economy. Socially unincorporated, Skinner assumes the character-role in the play which is variously recognisable in contemporary discourse as the Other, the barbarian, the fool, identities encompassed by Seamus Deane's description of Skinner as the outsider 'with an insider's knowledge'.[27] His mode of resistance, his speech and behaviour is most immediately codifiable within a ludic cultural tradition which Huizinga elaborates in *Homo Ludens* and which Mikhail Bakhtin has represented as the 'carnivalesque'. Part of an Old World cultural heritage which has tended to persist in cultures where Catholicism grafted itself on to pagan rural traditions, festivity and carnival, was directly oppositional to the official culture of Church and State. Bakhtin, in his introduction to *Rabalais and His World*, describes the [medieval] world of carnival as an alternative cultural space which celebrates visceral earthly and bodily processes suppressed by official culture through a grotesque humour structured around the mimicking, gesturing, fooling, and jesting of clowns and fools.[28]

Gar O'Donnell(*Philadelphia, Here I Come*), Cass McGuire (*The Loves of Cass Mcguire*) and Margo (*Lovers*) are figures in Friel's drama who prefigure the

carnivalised roles of Skinner in *The Freedom of the City* and Keeney in *Volunteers.* They use a language which operates at a libidinous and bodily level to arraign the conservative ideologies of Ireland. In *Philadelphia Here I Come*, the prohibition in speech upon emotions, sex, family ties and the political life produces an over-determined subjectivity which is theatrically off-loaded into the figure of Private Gar, who mobilises a profane, colloquial language against the repressive bearers of paternal family and social authority. 'Screwballs! Skinflint! Skittery Face!' colloquially emblematises the tight-fisted, tight-lipped, tight-arsed father, a condition of Ballybeg which is reinforced by the scatological, anally-retentive imagery applied to the ties which bind Public Gar to Ballybeg: 'Anchored by the ass./Bound by the bowels/Tethered to the toilet'. Senator Doogan's class authority is also deflated by a bodily language of sexual neurosis: 'a double spy for the Knights and the Masons, and that he takes pornographic photographs of Mrs D, and sends them to reverent mothers'.

Cass, too, speaks in a bawdy, carnival language. Her jokes are directed through the body as antithesis to the moral dimensions of patriarchal bourgeois discourse. In her repertoire are stories about 'cannibals and girls with Chinese tattoos on their bellies and about elephants and marooned sailors'. This language displays drives which are outside of cultural structurations of female identity and role. Cass ceases to operate as an effect of repression, a deviance which threatens the established social and symbolic order. In a cultural network which reifies the father by inserting him into a material and discursive signifying chain of privileged signifiers - law, money, power, Cass is attributed the guise of the female barbarian, an unruly and disordering figure.

Skinner's irreverence in *The Freedom of the City* towards the Protestant forms of pageantry, iconography and rank is mediated through carnivalesque clowning and bodily appetite: he pours drink from the cabinet, smokes the mayor's cigars, uses the phone to put a bet on a horse, writes in the 'distinguished visitors'

book, dons the robes of the Lord Mayor and confers the freedom of the city upon Lily - the political world of Ulster is turned upside down. His Shakespearian observation that 'Through tattered clothes small vices do appear,/ Robes and furred gowns do hide all' attribute to him a knowledge about social role-play which is capable of verbally disrobing the Imperial Emperor of Protestant and British Unionism. Skinner's gesture of sticking his ceremonial sword into the portrait of Hetherington symbolically completes his act of rebellion, a Lord of Misrule who embodies a political and cultural identity denied in the everyday reality.

Reworking carnival speech and behaviour through the antic intelligence of marginalised protagonists Friel's theatrical discourse articulates in public what is repressed, contentious and taboo in the public domain. It functions as a form of counter-discourse, a theatrical speech which 'validates its own medium, a medium that requires that certain indispensable statements be made'.[29]

Skinner raises the awareness that in Derry the freedom of the city is limited according to status as defined by religion, economy, culture and gender. The lack of freedom is represented in the militarily-seiged and politically-confined space of the Derry Guildhall and discursively in the investigative proceedings and conclusions of the Tribunal Court. In 'The Frontier of Writing' in *The Haw Lantern*, Heaney articulates in the 'tightness and nilness' in the space of military and political power the psychic experience of political repression. The civil rights protestors urged to 'Stand your ground. This is your city' are attempting to reorganise the freedoms available in the city. Private and public selves are revealed as contingent upon spatiality and discourse codified by the political and cultural components of the Ulster province, an emergent knowledge in Friel's work which is developed in *Volunteers*.

***Volunteers*: The Semantics of Catholic Nationalism**

A dialectical partner to *The Freedom of the City*, *Volunteers* is located in Dublin and involves an exploration of the semantics of space and discourse in the Irish South by drawing upon the contemporary controversy of the Wood Quay affair: 'a controversy that arose when it was discovered that Dublin City Corporation intended to build an office block on the site of the original Viking settlement from which Dublin grew'.[30] The stage-set is an archaeological site in the centre of the city which is representative of a temporal and spatial transition from a past-oriented Viking settlement, a site of history, to a future-oriented hotel-site, a space of modernity, mediated by the present condition of the ground as an archaeological/development site.

The state interest in the land is served by the material and linguistic appropriation of the site through the agency of the archaelogist, Dr King. His professional status and name signify him as a form of bourgeois monarch, purveyor of dominant culture practice and discourse. Like the Tribunal Judge, he is an empowered narrator of the city. His discourse is invested with the same empirical assumptions as those embedded in the Judge's discourse. This empirical approach to archaeological study is enunciated by Keeney's introduction to the tour of the site: 'archaeology is the scientific study of people and their culture by analysis of their artefacts and inscriptions and monuments and other such remains'. Keeney proceeds parodically to catalogue information about the material aspects of historical life which science lays claim to:

> 'we have established what a man in the year 930, for example, had for his lunch, what clothes he wore...'

The scientific methodological procedure and its factual statements are in conformity with a domesticated, Catholic bourgeois narrative of history. The official interpretation of the historical Viking settlement which the comic Keeney offers is a sentimentalised image of rural family life laid down in de Valera's idyll of the Irish homestead in his famous St Patrick's Day speech of 1943:

> '...very compact and very cosy...Fireplace in the centre. And around it, at night, our tenth-century stonemason or farmer or sailor, combing and narding his tresses while his good wife, Mollusca, and her happy brood practice their swordsmanship.'

Excessive sentimentalisation and gender-role inversions manufacture the ironies in Keeney's mocking reproach of the tranquillising Catholic nationalist view of history which persists into the present. It is this disposition towards nationalist history which opens up Friel's drama to accusations of colonialist revisionism. Asking such questions about the anaesthetising effect of historical discourse upon consciousness, however, prepares the way for his concern about the images of the past embodied in language which is raised by Hugh in *Translations*.

The Archaeology of Knowledge

Keeney's mock-staging of King's guided-tour of the archaeological site dramatises the Irish ground being subjected to the cultural and scientific gaze of the archaeologist. This inspection and interpretation of the ground tends to expose to view the way in which archaeology creates the ground as a discursive space inviting a Derridean deconstruction of the term 'archaeology' for its metaphorical structuration.[31] As a practice archaeology does investigate a temporal past, but it is the earth it excavates which most services the term with its signification of deep structure. It lends a physical dimension to the word which invokes the 'dig' for history and overrides the idea of archaeology as a spatial and linguistic practice constituted by the contemporary inscribing of the uncovered ground in the language of dominant culture discourse. In this sense the dig is less a temporal and more a linguistic event in the fashion described by Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 'in our time history aspires to the condition of archaeology, to the intrinsic description of the monument'.[32]

Like the Judge's reproduction of knowledge in the Tribunal Court, *Volunteers* bears witness not only to the ideological discourses of culture but also to their discursive production. The contemporary space is not being linguistically

interpreted but linguistically encoded. The new thing may be the revelation of past settlement through excavation but in terms of language 'the new thing here lies not in what is said but in the event of its return'.[33] The site and its significance are already written in official ideology. In this way the dominant culture repossesses the ground, reincorporates it into its own contemporary semantics of space and discourse.

George's wry comment on Butt's archaeological enthusiasms, 'Next thing he'll be looking for a site of his own', invokes the cultural dimensions of power built into discursive production. Professor King is attributed rights of ownership rendering the site as a cultural property which can be reified through published text. Angry at what he perceives as King's lack of archaeological integrity, Desmond refers disparagingly to King's cultural and material property: 'royalties from his worthless books would keep this place going for six years'. King is depicted as a quietist, compliant with commercial bourgeois values rather than an outspoken critic of its philistine materialism, according to Desmond, failing to:

> ...expose the act for what it is - a rape of irreplacable materials, a destruction of knowledge that the Irish people have a right to inherit, and a capitulation to money interests.

Keeney's later reference to King's archaeological enterprises endorses this rationale of bourgeois culture as a personal pursuit of public acclaim and private affluence, rather than a challenging search for cultural and historical meaning: 'he looted enough material to make another of his Aunt Coco coffee-table books'.

The professional layers of culture are seen as compliant agents of large-scale institutional drives of state politics and economic interests. The pressing demands of the property developers result in the foreclosure of the archaeological dig- illustrating the capitalist drive in the historical matrix. Where there exists a site of historical merit, there is to be a luxury hotel, as Keeney describes:

> Where we are now, the very spot we're standing on; this is going to be a foundation of enormous glass and steel hotel with a swimming-pool in the basement and a restaurant in the roof.

The drama extends the knowledges of space which Edward Soja deems crucial to a modern understanding of social structuration located in the 'production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes'.[34] The ground has passed into the economic ownership of the property developers and in turn into the hands of international hoteliers who obliterate *other* forms of knowing and consciousness. There is an image here of modernity in possession of the landscape and a history of social change captured by the concrete shaping of physical space and the determination of what is temporally preserved in the landscape.

Hieroglyphs of the Political Unconscious

The archaeological/development site exemplifies the constitution of social space, to appear within it demands practices, roles and discourses constituted and approved by capitalist and state culture. *Volunteers* speaks not only from the archaeological and development site but also from the forum of the internment camp, the prison-yard and the work-site where the chief protagonist, Keeney, appears as volunteer, internee and labourer. In Friel's radical vision these are also recognised as roles within which a citizenry appears in the social space. Seamus Deane asserts in 'Civilians and Barbarians' that the language of politics in Ireland is still dominated by the putative division between the barbarian and the civilian.[35] The internee plays or is attributed the role of the outlaw who dissents from or disagrees with the official vision of Ireland, constructing alternative images and knowledges about space, discourse and history.

The remarks of Daniel Berrigan, an American Jesuit, can help to clarify this condition. Richard Kearney in his Field Day Pamphlet 'Myth and Motherland' reports that on a visit to Ireland Berrigan remarked: 'if you want to understand a society you began by visiting its prisons and reading its poets'.[36] Berrigan visited Long Kesh prison in Belfast and spoke of 'a kind of hieroglyph being spelt out' by the protesting prisoners, 'a language of our political unconscious, outlawed by the

official discourse'.[37] With the action of Friel's drama taking place in a huge crater partitioned off from the ordinary citizenry described by the protagonist, Keeney, as 'a bomb crater', 'a huge womb' or a 'prison yard', the drama engages strata of political, existential and historical meaning out of the sight and below the level of quotidian consciousness. Taking Berrigan's paradigm, Friel acts as the artistic spokesman of the political unconscious. Keeney and his fellow internees serve as masks of deviancy whose speech defines and exceeds that proposed and legitimised by hegemonic state and capitalist culture.

Friel's and Heaney's dig into the historical for alternative or unofficial images of Ireland shares with Foucault the emblematic image of archaeology widely apparent in contemporary writings. *North* (1975), Heaney's most notable response to the political troubles of Ulster, was published in the same year as *Volunteers* (1975). Both works use a similar imagery of Viking settlement and its archaeological excavation to scrutinise and rework the semantic landscape of Irish history. One of the chief questions of the drama which is asked by Keeney concerns the identity of the skeletal Scandinavian, Leif, recovered from the subterranean domain of Irish ground and Viking culture. In his skeletal form he suggests the exhaustive depletion of official speech which strips discourse of its plenitude, as Foucault registers in 'The Order of Discourse': 'The effect of power discourses is not to reveal a plenitude of meaning, but a scarcity, a warding off of the powers and dangers of the language'.[38] But for Keeney and his fellow internees, men who in the official view of society are outsiders and barbarians, Leif acts as a vehicle of primary narcissism, a 'mirror darkly' into which they look to construct unofficial narratives of the pervasive violence in Irish history and society. Seamus Heaney in 'Digging Deeper' uses the flesh as a metaphor for the plenitude of discourse in the play spoken by the internees: 'the skeleton of a murdered Viking, exposed in situ, a bony structure that can be fleshed with any number of possible meanings'.[39]

Butt, mockingly attributed an 'old Gaelic head filled with a million grudges', offers a version of the past in which Leif is variously a traditionalist craftsman or labourer reminiscent of a disappeared rural and Gaelic Ireland. Pyne's narrative of Leif as a sailor, like himself, refers to internecine violence. Leif, a Viking explorer to America is murdered in Ireland for an act of miscegenation in marrying outside of the tribe. The internecine analogy is extended in Keeney's comparison of the begrudgery of Leif's tribe with that of the 'Boyces of Ballybeg' with whom Leif has 'a look on the mother's side of the house'. The Boyces are described as a family who 'hold grudges for generations': the implication is of enduring tribal quarrel in the historical matrix of Ireland. Leif is also likened to the unsanitary Knox, a socially elevated man who has fallen on hard times, and to the compliant foreman, George, 'was Leif a husk, like George, a cliche?'.

Sectarian warfare, begrudgery, sacrifice, deprivation: the theme of the internees' historical narratives is that of violence perpetrated by political and social authority or by pathologised social behaviour. These narratives reveal that each of the internees has contemporaneously been disposed of, evicted or displaced in a violent manner. But the major hieroglyph of the unofficial culture is the demotic story of Smiler who has threatened to link trade unionism from the capitalist economic sphere with injustices located in the political nationalist sphere. A stonemason and shop-steward from Donegal, Smiler has led a protest march against the unjust internment of a workmate. Arrested by the police, he was subsequently brutally beaten to a simpleton and interned. A victim of the state, he escapes from the archaeological site, stimulating Keeney's hopes that Smiler can rise above his volunteer, victim status: 'there's going to be a bloodletting', says Keeney, but referring to Smiler he adds 'at least now he's not going to be a volunteer'. But instead he returns to the site of his own volition and is feted by his fellow inmates as the star victim of violence.

Seamus Heaney has spoken of the need 'to grant the religious intensity of the violence its deplorable authenticity and complexity'.[40] The figure of Tollund Man in the poem of that name in *North* represents an archetypal image of sacrifice to the land, 'Naked except for/ The cap, noose and girdle', similar to that of Leif in *Volunteers*. The rationale of victim or volunteer is that his very deviancy and marginality marks out his 'heroic' status. By experiencing the 'holy pain' of resistance, the victim takes on a quasi-sacerdotal status. Hence in the Christian religion the reverence for the fetishised image of a crucified Christ who takes on the sins of the world and the pain and suffering of all humanity. Resistance thus becomes a form of crypto-religion, swollen with symbolic significance - his suffering and humiliation become the suffering and humiliation of his race. Smiler is linked to his people and their identities through their own sense of marginality as internees and in the larger Republican sense to the marginal status of the Irish people in relation to their colonial rulers.

The celebration of Smiler's return is presented in the idiom of religious ritual and worship, raising the comparative spectre of Viking sacrificial ritual as instanced by Keeney's thoughts about Leif, the Viking discovered with a 'leather thong around his neck':

> '...was the poor eejit just grabbed out of a crowd one spring morning and a noose tightened round his neck? Or...maybe the poor hoor considered it an honour to die - maybe he volunteered: Take this neck, this life, for the god or the cause or whatever. Of course, acceptance of either hypothesis would indicate that he was - to coin a phrase - a victim of his society.

The inmates' reverence foregrounds the language and practice of equivalent Irish nationalist structures of feeling. The descriptive action of Butt - who is most associated with Gaeldom - in the stage-notes reads:

> ...he drapes a very large sack around Smiler's shoulders. It is so long that it hangs down his sides and looks like a ritualistic robe, or ecclesiastical cope.

Keeney recognises the propensity of the oppressed Irish to heroise the victim role and in a passionate angry outburst accuses Smiler and the men of masochistic religious desires: 'Imbecile acolytes fluttering about a pig-headed imbecile victim.

For Christ's sake is there no end to it?'. It is state victimisation and the sacralising of volunteer and victim which Friel seeks to deconstruct through the physical drama of Smiler and the emotional drama of Keeney. As Seamus Heaney comments upon 'volunteer', 'The word has a sacral edge which blunts (nevertheless) to a sanctimoniousness that the play is intent on devastating'.[41]

The Hazards of Language

In digging into the roots of Irish culture through the narrative spadework of the volunteers, Friel exhibits in the drama the way in which linguistic concepts encode and determine society's view of the past: 'we classify, and therefore make, our world through words'.[42] The volunteers are offering mappings of their own world, potential reorganisers on Friel's stage of the public habitation of reality. Their activity reveals that the past is a linguistic construct. The institutional formations of language define and restrict the freedom of Keeney and his fellow inmates as much as the institutional structures of prison, internment and work-yard. Language functions for the dissenter, not so much to articulate and express alternative perspectives, but more to encode those who would speak from such positions. This is signalled in Keeney's acerbic comments to George, the site foreman, about 'the hazards of language' in which he predicates language as a medium of oppression. On Leif, he ruminates, 'Maybe he was a casualty of language' and philosophically reflects 'Damn it, which of us here isn't?'.

Beyond the textual and archaeological discourse of King, it is George, whom Seamus Heaney terms 'a petty bourgeois foreman',[43] who is the major mediator of official cultural practice and discourse. George shares with Michael Hegarty in *The Freedom of the City*, a liberal vision of the state, a discourse of aesthetic and social enlightenment which Keeney persistently chides, mocks and scoffs at in order to expose it as a ritual, unthinking form of utterance. The broken Viking jug functions as a symbol of George's specious coherency. The illusory idea the repaired jug

represents, that history can be coherently reassembled into a site of unity, and that a unity of the enlightened self can be assembled in society, is mocked by Keeney's ironic reading of the jug:

> 'Smiler's pieces all put together and making a handsome jug! It's a symbol, George. This is Smiler, George; Smiler restored: Smiler, full, free and integrated.'

Smiler's temporary escape, from prison, from the role of victim, which generates Keeney's euphoric jest, cannot be sustained. Restoration of the jug is the lie of coherence, of Smiler, of Leif, of Keeney, of history itself.

When George advises Butt to keep away from Keeney, the latter drops the affectionately restored jug, breaking it into a myriad fragments, just as Keeney's explosive libidinal speech functions as a scatter bomb exploding the myth of both state unity and discursive unity. By virtue of Butt's act, the violence administered by the state to the shattered Smiler is recuperated as a knowledge. Loyalty to Keeney, to the outcasts, to the otherness of Keeney's penetrating vision of the social order is upheld and, in this instance, George's own vision of society is shattered. He is faced with the unexpectedly unfamiliar for he doesn't have the frameworks or codes to understand:

> This action, too, is inscrutable, deviant, totally unexpected - particularly since Butt has been the one volunteer apparently willing to play the establishment game in his eagerness to work and learn...Butt reveals where he stands - with Keeney, with the kind of touch Keeney represents, a touch that is creative rather than restorative...[44]

George's naivety represents a failure of vision, for it is capable only of interpreting the internees as ignorant, deviant, disordered. The inability to comprehend the structures of oppression is what feeds oppression:

> Human cruelty is not only revealed in the skeleton of a man who has obviously been killed, but also by the action on stage with its growing awareness of impending death.[45]

The warder's, the foreman's and the archaeological student's complete lack of understanding is itself a form of cruelty.

Writing extends the linguistic wounding of Keeney, for he is not only subject to the routine speech of quotidian life but is also processed via official modes of writing through which power speaks and functions. The textual formats are deemed part of writing's power and regulation. Book, journal, newspaper, report and letter, the forms of writing which appear in the play, are already inserted into the authority structures of society, graded in a hierarchy of access and influence. Keeney writes a mock letter to the newspapers, full of a liberal idiom which finally breaks down into scandalous accusation - signalling the futility of such a gesture. As Foucault theorises, what can be said, the manner in which it can be said, and who can say it, is integral to the structures of social power.

The 'report' that George makes on the conduct of the volunteers suggests how writing and its forms inscribe, codify and oppress. As a conduit of official speech, his written comments encode Keeney through a liberal interpretation of conduct in a manner which threaten his status and identity: 'The governor has asked us to submit a report on your conduct here and in all honesty I can find nothing good to say about him'. He construes Keeney as 'a real danger man', a reference not only to Keeney's tendency to speak a verbal satire which dispossess others of their meaning, their legitimacy, stopping them in their unconscious tracks, making them appear foolish, but also the threat of the fool who understands the secret of the arbitrariness of the linguistic and cultural codes that are played out in society.

Playing the Fool

Pirandello's *Henry IV* explains the nature of the danger of the madman to an official order. The words of the character trapped in the carnival guise of Henry IV and the inverted vision of the fool can appositely represent the manner in which Keeney threatens the stability of the social order:

> In the presence of the madman you feel your dismay turn to terror. Like something making the ground give way beneath your feet, taking away the very air you breath. To be with a madman, someone who shakes the

> foundations, the logic of the whole structures of everything you've built in and around yourselves.[46]

In *Volunteers*, the formal condition of social space, role and language are directed into and dispersed through the prism of Keeney's character in a manner calculated to question the logic of the whole structure of everything built in and around official social discourse. Keeney is a denaturalising force, a figure moving into fluidity, difference, where speech, identity, are governed by the logic of the carnivalesque.

The mocking of 'holy theology'[47] was a popular festive form of Carnival. In the parody of 'The Sign of the Cross', Keeney mocks the simplistic reverence of modern Ireland towards a holy trinity of Catholic and capitalist forms of authority: 'In nomine Smiler simplissimo et Knoxie stinkissimo et George industrissimo'. His riposte to the dehumanising scientific nomenclature of Viking food, 'Chernopodium-goosefoot-pale persicana', is to mock its officious, restrictive and obfuscatory definitions with a parody founded upon a speech of free-association which opens up language to the free and fluid play of creativity and desire:

> Keeney: Chernopodium-goosefoot-foot-loose-fancy-free-tickle-my-fancy-meeting-you-here-tell me where is my fancy bred - it has a lot of names. My grandmother used to boil it with nettles and give it to us.
>
> Pyne: That a fact?
>
> Keeney: Yes. When we were young turkeys and she wanted to redden our combs.

Latinate terminology encounters a flamboyant associative vernacular. Desire and creativity which crystalise around the signifier 'fancy' are pitted against the restrictive empirical signifier 'fact'. Fancy is a form of sexual, sensual, ludic life, fact a form of rationalist and political control of the individual, the body, the senses and play. Keeney's parodies of scientific Latin nomenclature and Latin church prayers are comparable to the voice of carnival mocking the gravitas of official authority - a profanation of the sacred axioms and doctrines of the rationalist and puritan structures of scientific reason and official state Catholicism upon which the social order depends.

Read through technique and representation, Keeney appears in the carnival guise of clown and fool, satirically reproducing a host of social voices defined by Bakhtin as 'heteroglossia', the social diversity of speech types, recycled through the literary text in order to take issue with the 'verbal-ideological'[48] utterances of society. Keeney becomes the equivalent of the polyphonic artist full of carnival spirit, 'the heteroglossia of the clown sounds forth ridiculing all languages',[49] an articulator of the unwritten rules on which the construction of a culturally bound meaningful universe depends. Keeney dons the mask of the clown ('Years of practice have made his public mask of the joker almost perfect') and speaks an unofficial, carnival discourse which can outline the boundaries of official discourse and mock its contents. Keeney's carnival speech ultimately represents, like Skinner's, a response to social and linguistic exile. They are figures in the drama who see with a clear vision the structures that make them peripheral to the cultural environment in which they live.

Skinner and Keeney act as characters in a post-colonial drama. They begin to explain the making of the colonised space - which initiates an excavation of the very grounds upon which the colonising culture is built, a knowledge which can threaten to undo or dissolve the invading and the internal powers. It is the investigation into these foundational knowledges that make Skinner and Keeney distinctive late-twentieth century protagonists giving a new twist to the nature of the tragic hero: they self-consciously apprehend the matrices of the political, cultural and language structures which oppress them, but it is a knowledge which only enhances their incapacity for action. It is in this way that Friel's drama of the 1970s begins to come to terms with and produce a post-colonial knowledge about the physical, linguistic and cultural grounds which constitute contemporary Ireland.

1. George O'Brien, *Brian Friel*, p.50.

2. Richard Pine, *Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama*, p.107.

3. George O'Brien, p.78.

4. George O'Brien, p.79.

5. Des Hickey and Gus Smith, 'Two Playwrights with a Single Theme', in *A Paler Shade of Green*, pp.220-227 (p.221).

6. Ulf Dantanus, *Brian Friel: A Study*, p.32.

7. Des Hickey, p.221.

8. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces, *Diacritics*, 1 (1986), 22-27 (p.22).

9. Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, p.1.

10. George Broadbent, 'Buildings and Symbols of Political Ideology', in *Semiotics 1980*, compiled by Michael Herzfeld and Margaret D. Lenhart, pp.45-54 (p.47).

11. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, p.118.

12. Edward W. Soja, p.121.

13. Edward W. Soja, p.18.

14. Louis Althusser, 'On Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by Ben Brewster, pp.121-73 (p.137).

    Intriguing parallels can be drawn between Brian Friel and Louis Althusser as writers who are Catholic and have reference to counter-colonial movements, in British Ulster and French Algeria respectively; both were involved in civil dissent movements in 1968, and each responds in the wake of the dissent with a radical political analysis of state repression.

15. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Herod: Reflections on Political Violence*, p.20.

16. Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', in *Untying the Text*, edited by Robert Young, pp.48-78 (p.52).

17. 'The Order of Discourse', p.53.

18. R. Coward and J. Ellis in *Language and Materialism*, p.32.

19. 'The Order of Discourse', p.58.

20. See Ulick O'Connor, *Brian Friel: Crisis and Commitment*, p.13.

21. Ulick O'Connor, p.13.

22. Liz Curtis, *Ireland: The Propaganda War*, p.49.

23. Liz Curtis, p.49.

24. Terry Eagleton, 'Brecht and Rhetoric', in *Against The Grain*, pp.167-72 (p.169).

25. 'The Order of Discourse', p.62.

26. Louis Althusser, p.60.

27. Seamus Deane, 'Brian Friel: The Double Stage', in *Celtic Revivals*, pp.166-73 (p.169).

28. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Introduction' to *Rabalais and His World.*

29. George O'Brien, p.50.

30. George O'Brien, p.83.

31. See Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' in *Writing and Difference* for a discussion on the play of tropes within linguistic structure.

32. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.7.

33. 'The Order of Discourse', p.58.

34. Edward W. Soja, p.11.

35. Seamus Deane, 'Civilians and Barbarians', in *Ireland's Field Day*, pp.31-42.

36 Richard Kearney, 'Myth and Motherland', in *Ireland's Field Day*, pp.61-80 (p.61).

37. Richard Kearney, p.61.

38. 'The Order of Discourse', p.49.

39. Seamus Heaney, 'Digging Deeper: Brian Friel's *Volunteers*', in *Preoccupations*, pp.214-16 (p.215).

40. Seamus Heaney, 'Feeling into Words', in *Preoccupations*, pp.41-60 (p.57).

41. 'Digging Deeper: Brian Friel's *Volunteers*', p.214.

42. George Steiner, *After Babel*, p.102.

43. 'Digging Deeper: Brian Friel's *Volunteers*', p.215.

44. George O'Brien, p.86.

45. George O'Brien, p.86.

46. Luigi Pirandello, *Henry IV*, in *Three Plays*, pp.73-147 (p.130).

47. *Rabalais and His World*, p.80.

48. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.273.

49. *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.273.

CHAPTER 2: WRITING IRELAND

'What kind of space are we talking about? And to whom does it belong?'.[1] These are the questions that *The Freedom of the City* and *Volunteers* have been engaged in, looking at the urban space and defining its condition and ownership, politically, economically, and discursively. These dramas of the early seventies are located in the urban environments of Derry and Dublin, places where political activity is at its most intense in modern society. But the historical colonisation of Ireland took place mainly in the countryside and it is in the countryside that the contested political and cultural coding of native Irish identity in colonial, anti-colonial and post-colonial discourse has essentially been located.

Philadelphia, Here I Come (1964) begins the increasing concentration in Brian Friel's work on the fictional and townland of Ballybeg which he sites in rural Donegal. Estyn Evans, in *Irish Folk Ways*, claims that 'In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of these names Ballybeg (little town)'.[2] This knowledge suggests the writer's attempt to nominate the mythical townland in terms which are universal to Ireland by name, size, location and experience, providing Friel with a fictive image which can present the intense process of change and disturbance in the cultural matrix of rural Ireland while reserving precise definitions as to the content of the term Ireland. To borrow the idiom of Tony Pinkney from his article 'Futures from Critical and Cultural Theory' the active making of history *takes place, occurred in and through place.* Richard Pine puts the case for Friel's vision of the making of Ireland eloquently: 'Ballybeg *represents* the affective image of an

affiliating culture moving through both time and place'[3] exploring 'the lesson and legacy of a colonial past'[4] which is still being worked through.

A noteworthy event at the turn of the eighties was the formation of the Field Day Theatre Company by Brian Friel and the actor Stephen Rae whose headquarters was located in Derry. Field Day rapidly expanded the board taking on four other directors, Seamus Deane, Seamus Heaney, David Hammond and Tom Paulin, with the brief of the company published in 1985 in a Preface to *Ireland's Field Day* to 'contribute to the solution of the present crisis by producing analyses of the established opinions, myths and stereotypes which had become both a symptom and a cause of the current situation'. In the plays written and produced around the turn of the eighties, *Living Quarters* (1977), *Aristocrats* (1979), *Faith Healer* (1979), *Translations* (1980) and *The Communication Cord* (1983), Friel becomes intensely preoccupied with the rural village of Ballybeg as a fictional setting for his drama, explicable as a post-colonial stock-taking of myths and stereotypes which have accrued within and around rural Ireland.

Ending Ancient Time

George O'Brien notes that *Translations* was the inaugural production of the Field Day Theatre Company and that its premiere took place at the Guildhall, Derry, on 23 September 1980 - 'less than ten years after *The Freedom of the City* availed of the same building for quite other symbolic purpose'.[5] Stephen Rae, speaking on behalf of Field Day insinuates that the Guildhall is to be read through a colonialist coding:

> The Guildhall in Derry is a huge symbol of Empire and the Union, of an adherence to English principles. Of course, there is an irony in our doing our plays here which maybe undermines that position. Certainly we come from a different point of view.[6]

The irony with Brian Friel's *Translations* is that he takes city-dwellers positioned within contemporary forms of sectarian and neo-colonial conflict and relocates them historically in an Irish countryside undergoing imperialist change.

The major historical emergence informing *Translations* is the rise of a scientific rationalism and economic capitalism constituted in England during the eras of the sixteenth-century Reformation, seventeenth century Empiricism, eighteenth-century Enlightenment and nineteenth-century Industrialism. Michel Foucault equates this will-to-know which marks the close of the Middle Ages with the mode of experience known as modernity which is natal

> ...at the turn of the sixteenth century (and particularly in England), [where] there appeared a will to know which...sketched out schemes of possible, observable, measurable, classifiable objects...prescribed by the technical level.[7]

G.H. Bantock specifically locates in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the emergence of empiricism whose 'patron saints and pioneers were British: Bacon, Newton and Locke'. There is a shift, he claims, towards a detached relationship with nature and God and 'a phenomenological universe is created with 'mathematics' providing the unifying structure'.[8]

In keeping with a Weberian reading of the historical, Bantock links the epistemological rise of empiricism, science and technology, to social and economic change, the emergence of a puritan, work-oriented, middle-class who shape up into a rising bourgeoisie in a new capitalist and imperialist order. These capitalist energies and imperialist drives in the historical matrix which Friel has already depicted at work in contemporary Ireland in *Volunteers*, are given historical embodiment in *Translations* by the figure of Lancey, whom Yolland likens to his own father:

> Lancey's so like my father...The perfect colonial servant: not only must the job be done - it must be done with excellence. Father has that drive, too; that dedication; that indefatigable energy. He builds roads-hopping from one end of the Empire to the other.

The economic history is given political and cultural substance in the revolutionary history which Yolland speaks of in his references to his father:

> Born in 1789 - the very day the Bastille fell...He inherited a new world the day he was born...the Year One. Ancient time was at an end...Possibilities were endless and exacting.

Signalled here is the investitutre of a rational, bourgeois democracy as the governing political and epistemological form in European society. What is being presented in *Translations* is a history in which bourgeois politics and economics constituted within an empiricist universe are overtaking older forms of economy and cosmology, worked through the English conquest of agrarian Ireland in the nineteenth-century on the eve of the Great Famine.

In *Michael Foucault: Power/Knowledge*, Foucault expresses a desire to study how 'the military and the administration actually came to inscribe themselves both on a material soil and within forms of discourse'.[9] Friel's dramatic history of Ireland as a colony in *Translations* takes up that very study, scrutinising the army as a producer of order and knowledge within a spatial geography and colonial discourse. The Royal Engineers nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey of Ireland furnishes Friel with an image of colonial conquest which is not only political and military but also linguistic and discursive. In an article in *Crane Bag*, Friel explains how the literary idea of the Ordnance Survey as an image of colonisation occurred to him:

> Then in 1976 I came across *A Paper Landscape*. And suddenly here was the confluence - the aggregate - of all those notions that had been visiting me over the previous years: the first half of the nineteenth century; an aspect of colonialism; the death of the Irish language and the acquisition of English. Here was the perfect metaphor to accommodate and realise all these shadowy notions -'map making'.[10]

Survey, Map and Name-Book emerge in the play as a composite text engendering a collective image of the way a colonising English culture, constituted in an economy of mercantile capitalism and an *episteme* of rationalist empiricism, sought to impose itself at political and discursive levels on settled geographical Irish space.

The Royal Engineers who carry out the Survey are personally and symbolically represented by Lancey as cartographer ('maker of maps') and Yolland as orthographer ('he gives names to places'). As the heads of the company of soldiers they are the epistemological representatives of the cognitive vision of the map-making English culture. Lancey's imagery and discourse about the process of map-making is couched in a language imbued with the Euclidean/Cartesian tradition:

> His majesty's government has ordered the first ever comprehensive survey of this entire country - a general triangulation which will embrace detailed hydrographic and topographic information and which will be executed to a scale of six inches to the English mile.

In Lancey's eyes, the Irish landscape is an abstract, universal space which can be mathematically plotted and reduced to a spatial framework. The theodolite, chains and poles in Friel's drama are technological artefacts which represent and mobilise a scientific empiricist perspective. The telescopic observation of the skies by Galileo which G.H. Bantock cites exemplifies the manner in which textuality and discourse are integral to scientific observation of the world:

> Philosophy is written in that great book which ever lies before our eyes - I mean the universe - but we cannot understand it if we do not at first learn the language and grasp the symbols in which it is written. This book is written in mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without whose help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of it.[11]

Here are all the ingredients of a scientific humanism: text, mathematical knowledge, education and learning which is both necessary knowledge and metaphor for the scientific universe which Galileo witnesses. The cosmos changes from a sacred to a phenomenal world made up of geometrical and trigonometrical co-ordinates. This empowered scientific gaze proposes a 'real' world, notionally discovered rather than projected, 'a world of mathematically measurable motions of space and time'.[12]

The technological and empirical reordering is simultaneously taking place in England and Ireland in the period in which Friel sets *Translations*.

Like *Translations*, *Middlemarch* (1869) is a form of historical literature set in the Midlands countryside of 1831 during the same epoch of reform in England with which Friel's text deals. George Eliot fictionally represents the rural countryside of England being *colonised* by the dominant technological and empiricist practices of an expanding capitalism. In the rural fields, that 'grassy corner' of Frick, four railway surveyors appear, mapping the countryside with similar implements and documents to which Friel refers, spirit-levels, measuring-chains and maps. A number of fieldhands offer violent resistance to the appearance in the landscape of this new technological order, running the surveyors off the land. Caleb, local builder and land-agent, like Owen in *Translations*, acts as a pacifying intermediary. As a middle-man he is also a double man - a native peasant and a business agent: 'There was a striking mixture in him of rigourous notions about workmen and practical indulgence towards them'.[13] The capitalist business and work-ethic (Caleb's part is to negotiate a good price for the sale of a parcel of Dorothea's to the railway company) compete with a sense of fellowship. Caleb arbitrates in favour of the rule of law and the interest of capital. His paternalistic role is not dissimilar to that of the 'go-between' Owen in *Translations* who has been enlisted to work for the army. Progress demonises the resistor, both characters mediate not only a personal confrontation but also one which is historically economic and empiricist: one of the labourers is attributed a 'feudal spirit', nominally unacquainted 'with the Age of Reason and the Rights of Man'[14] to which his world-view must succumb.

Mapping the Terrain

Lancey's nominalist view of the map as 'a representation on paper...a paper picture...representing the country' proposes that words and signs play no part in the formation of reality other than as instrumental tools for naming the object world. Kearney classifies Lancey's thinking as positivistic, a theory

which can be usefully understood by 'the philosophical system of August Comte which recognises only positive facts and observable phenomena, rejecting metaphysics and theism'.[15] Lancey's form of naming is supported by Yolland's entries in the 'Name-Book' which accompanies the map. As William Boelhower argues in his essay 'Inventing America: A Model of Cartographic Semiosis', place-names are signatures of the empiricist eye which charts the landscape, translating the land and the people through the epistemological vision of the English world: 'At the centre of the map is not geography *in se* but the [empirical] eye of the cartographer'.[16]

Friel's stagenote at the beginning of Act 2 describes the orthographic project of re-ordering of the landscape by refraction of Gaelic place-name through the language of the English coloniser:

> The sappers have already mapped most of the area. Yolland's official task, which Owen is now doing, is to take each of the Gaelic names - every hill, stream, rock, even every patch of ground which possessed its own distinctive Irish name - and Anglicise it, either by changing it into an appropriate English sound or by translating it into English words.

The issue at stake becomes one of the Irish people's cultural and spiritual habitation of the Irish terrain. How radically altered are the mental maps by linguistic translation from Gaelic to English linguistic speech? The Gaelic place-names organise the Irish communities habitation of reality and reveal the way in which the rural, agrarian culture is composed by its topographical and spiritual relationship to its environment. By attaching names of animals to features of the landscape: *Poll na gCaorach* (Sheepsrock), *Lis na Muc* (Fort of the Pigs), the terrain is not only understood through forms of rural economy but is invested with a zoomorphic aspect which connotes vestiges of an animistic relation to land. Place-names also formulate an intimate psychic contact with the land by proposing how the contours of the landscape are embedded in language and psyche: Tra Bhan (White Strand), Machaire Ban (Whiteplains), Druim Luachra (The Black Ridge). As an Englishman, Yolland lacks this

cognitive relationship. He scans the topographical features of the map as described by Owen:

> On past Burnfoot, and there's nothing around here that has any name that I know of until we come down here to the south end, just about here...and there should be a ridge of rocks here.

Yolland's response is to announce 'I'm lost'. He does not possess the type of embedded knowledge and ways of seeing accessible to Owen. What he experiences is the barrenness of an uninscribed space; his own reading of the terrain needs a different grammar which derives from a sophisticated technological culture which can provide a degree of cartographic certainty.

The names *Tobair Vree* (Brian's Well), The Murren (Saint Muranus) and Termon (from Terminus, god of boundaries) harbour religious and divine perceptions of the landscape and exemplify the mediation of place through the traditional Gaelic genre of the *dinnseanchas*. R. F. Foster notes the continuity of this tradition in Irish culture: '*Dinnseanchas* the celebration of place-names, was a feature of this poetic topography; what endured was the mythic landscape, providing escape and inspiration'.[17] The Murren is a corruption of Saint Muranus and announces the long spiritual tradition of the people and the way in which the Catholic Church grafted itself on to the pagan Celtic tradition in Ireland: 'It seems Muranus had a monastery somewhere about here at the beginning of the seventh century'. The well possesses a numinous quality, *Tobair Vree* represents the Irish culture's faith in nature's ability to heal: 'there used to be a well there...and an old man called Brian...got it into his head the water in that well was blessed'. In this perception of the landscape, the spiritual and the natural are undifferentiated.

The question for translation that follows is formulated by the sceptical Owen who is half-inured to English rationalism:

> What do we do with a name like that?' Do we scrap Tobair Vree altogether and call it - what? - The Cross? - Crossroads? Or do we keep

> piety with a man long dead, long forgotten, his name "eroded" beyond recognition, whose trivial little story nobody in the parish remembers?

From Owen's explanation it is clear that the historical meaning of place-name is not evident to most members of the community; indeed that the diachronic semantic meanings are closed off to them:

> I know the story (about Tobair Vree) because my grandfather told it to me. But ask Doalty - or Maire - or Bridget - even my father - even Manus - why its called Tobair Vree; I know they don't know.

But Owen's limited perception omits the view that is proposed in Steiner's *After Babel*, a highly influential text upon Friel's drama:

> When using a word we wake into resonance its entire previous history...it is what linguists call a diachronic structure.[18]

Semantically, what is important here is that words have internalised the past, that language is the store of cumulative experience, and when the language is spoken it releases into the individual psyche the sublimated collective experience. This is the ontological model of language: that words are not only the repository of values, beliefs, attitudes, but also the repository of collective psychic experience. Heaney's commentary on place, that it is known at 'a lived, illiterate and unconscious level'[19] as well as a conscious one, explains this linguistic psychology. Eitel F. Timm offers *Tobair Vree* as such a case in point:

> In the imagination of the inhabitants of a country in which there are uncountable sacred springs, naturally the name Tobair evokes associations and images which do not necessarily have to be identical with the actual story of this particular well.[20]

He proposes that the name may easily be 'associated with the idea and story of Brian Boru'- another mythically-encoded agent of Gaelic life. Notably, it is after Owen's enunciation of Tobair Vree and the re-awakening in his mind of its Gaelic meaning that he renounces his identity as a go-between and reassumes his Gaelic name and his cultural abjuration crisis commences.

Yolland insists on maintaining the original name of *Tobair Vree*, instructing Owen to enter it into the Name-Book. But, ironically, it is this

Gaelic naming of *Tobair Vree* by Yolland which leads Maire to invite him to the local dance, setting in motion the romance narrative which leads to Yolland's death. Yolland has unwittingly and naively stepped out of his English domain of culture and language into an Irish landscape by retaining the original place-name, breaking down tribal allegiance and bonds which then precipitate the political violence in the drama. Jimmy Jack's closing remarks that 'you don't cross these borders casually - both sides get very angry', records an epitaph to Yolland's romanticism, an ideology and perception which ultimately fails to assimilate fully the contradictory knowledge of his role as a 'clerk of the Empire', an agent of colonial translation who is inflicting deep emotional, psychic and spiritual damage upon the native population of Ireland.

The internalisation of English breaks down the Gaelic imagining of space and creates alternative spatial and temporal vistas. In *Postmodern Geographies*, Soja concentrates his interest on what he calls an 'ontology of space-time-being'.[21] Modernisation recomposes temporality, from the mythopoeic to empiricist, and spatiality, from the mythopoeic to the materialist, which results in the recomposition of social being. Colonisation is comprehended in this sense as a transformation of the sense of space and time which regulate social life and give meaning to existence. Jimmy Jack exemplifies life in a different time/space continuum from that of the empirical monochromatic time and unitary space. Jimmy Jack lives in sacral time and space, experiencing his locality as a mix of the material and the mythical, imagining Greek and Celtic goddesses as part of the quotidian reality in which he lives.

In the transfer, there is a laying waste to the sacral sense of place, imaged in the scorched earth policy of Lancey. In the new language, the new order and the new cosmology time and space ~~is~~ are not mutual and shared but shaped, apportioned and 'owned' by commercial, political and cultural interests. Hugh, the arbiter of Ireland's historical dilemma in the play, points out that the

invader's language comes bearing the values and practices of a capitalist commodity regime. He compares the ostentations of the Irish imagination and the deprivations of the Irish material life of 'mud cabins and a diet of potatoes', with the philistinism of the English culture and the materialist, commercial interest fixed in the language, 'usually used', reflects Hugh, 'for the purpose of commerce...to which the tongue seemed particularly suited'. Hugh's *prodigal* son, Owen, uses the English language in this very manner. His relationship to English is a commodity relationship. He re-enters the community on the pay-roll of the British Army as a translator, or as Owen himself puts it, as a 'go-between'.

The 'theodolite' appears as the new technological god in the landscape, emissary of an empowered English gaze which is reconstruing the knowledge of Irish space and effectively replacing pagan deities with a technological god. The shamanistic Jimmy Jack divulges its etymology: '*Theo-theos*- something to do with a god'. Thus, the verb 'executed' which describes the map-making process sits ominously in Lancey's discourse, a sense in which the act is putting the Irish mythopoeic conception of the ground to death - a sinister suspicion reinforced by the suggested spearing of Ireland by the military man whose name, *Lancey*, bears an archetypal military and mythic resonance. Hugh recognises that the contours between self and landscape mediated by the Gaelic language have been made incongruous: 'a civilisation can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of...fact'. The waited for and weighted word 'fact' refers to the material historical change and to the new empiricism which has taken hold of the land. The internal cultural landscape and the external geographical landscape are no longer part of a continuum synthesised in the sphere of the native Gaelic language.

Writing Ireland

Although already fully named, fully occupied with its own spatial knowledge and history given to the place by the native Gaelic inhabitants, Ireland and its peoples are about to be linguistically transformed and discursively re-written by an empowered English culture of print. In *Writing Ireland* David Cairns and Shaun Richards declare the processes which produce the Irish within colonial discourses of the barbarian and the civilian but omit the technological, documentational and institutional history of print which is essential to the discursive incorporation of Ireland. The linking of power and knowledge through the mechanisms of print suggests the importance of the work of Michel Foucault in contemporary thinking about writing in society: the transport from an Irish to an English world-view is enacted through the power of a culture able to mobilise its ideas, epistemologies and cosmology through the practice of writing, its formats here - reports, maps, name-books, indexes.

Friel makes specific reference in his description of Lancey to the fetishistic power of writing and its 'report' format which he has already problematised in *Volunteers*: 'He inspected every single report-even examining the texture of the paper and commenting on the neatness of the handwriting'. Writing features here as a tool of imperialist bureaucracy and administration, instrumental in promoting and codifying a regimentalised, rationalist social and political order by which Lancey and his ilk are possessed. The role of writing and documentation as it is manifest in map and name-book in *Translations* is acknowledged by Mary Hamer in 'Putting Ireland on the Map' in the perception that the anglicisations which were written onto maps and entered into the surveyor's name-book were finally catalogued in *The Townland Index*,[22] an archival text which evinces the discursive relations of power between the coloniser and the colonised. The Name-Book is implicated in the semiotic transportation of Ireland into the keeping of England, containing an

encyclopedic inventory of anglicised place-names. The name-book and map are themselves forms of writing which signify the English regime and its epistemological and discursive relations with Ireland. Irish space is being brought into the purview of English institutions. The documentation exemplifies and is evidence of how an empiricist discourse of Ireland is written on to Ireland by England within 'whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced'.[23]

This Foucauldian notion, that culture is a construct of language is fluently articulated by George Steiner in *After Babel.* Steiner, an influential figure upon Friel, argues that 'The landscape composed by the past tense, the semantic organisation of remembrance, is stylised and differently coded by different cultures'.[24] In the terms of Hugh in *Translations*, historical consciousness is wrought by images and language: 'it is not the literal past , the "facts" of history that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language'. This could be the motto for the Field Day project cited in *Ireland's Field Day* and for the generality of Friel's work in the nineteen eighties. Using Hugh as a spokesman, Friel offers here a definition of contemporary discourse, acknowledging that the historical era in which he is situated is a period during which text and writing have become the new form of knowing, representing and remembering. *Space, text, writing, education, history* themselves belong to a lexicon which access secular, empiricist ways of responding to the world, languages, concepts and practices inaugurated by an empiricist/humanist way of knowing and being in the world.

Writing as Ethnocentrism

In removing 'writing' from the specialised sphere of the literary, Friel can be recognised at this juncture as a post-colonialist writer accessing and

unmaking the spatial, temporal and discursive ground on which culture is founded. The authors of *The Empire Writes Back* claim that:

> The absence or presence of writing is possibly the most important element on the colonial situation. Writing does not merely introduce a communicative instrument, but also involves an entirely different and intrusive orientation to knowledge and interpretation. In many post-colonial societies, it was not the English language which had the greatest effect, but writing itself.[25]

Jacques Derrida's *On Grammatology* is of value here, for as Jon Stratton points out in *Writing Sites*, he offers not only 'a history of writing which is a history of phonic alphabet writing and its emergence'[26] but also the knowledge that such a history is ethnocentric in character. Derrida begins his treatise on writing by directing attention to the '*ethnocentrism* which everywhere and always had controlled the concept of writing'.[27] Logocentrism, which Derrida defines as the 'metaphysics of phonetic writing', is 'nothing but the most powerful and original ethnocentrism in the process of imposing itself upon the world'.[28] In this context, Derrida, an Algerian Jew aware of a French colonial history and whom Eagleton calls an 'ex-colonial',[29] offers insight into the way English colonial discourse is not only a content but also a medium-led condition: to acquire writing will be to acquire the ethnocentrism attaching to its production and practices even though its content may be disputed.

This knowledge invites attention to the very substance of writing as a spatial and temporal concept. Writing does not only discursively codify history but the very shape and appearance of a Latin alphabetic form of writing, it's abstract, symbolic, linear form, provides the detachment and the definition for rationalist ideas of past, present and future mapped out on the abstract space of the printed page. In his chapter 'On Grammatology as a Positive Science', Jacques Derrida notes that in mythogram, pictogram, ideogram, meaning is 'not subjected to successivity'.[30] Writing, he argues, represses this 'pluri-dimensionality', introducing the concept of *'linearisation'* which situates writing within an economy of a linear organisation of technics, time and history. This

could be compared with the Celtic script of ogham, for example, which precedes the Latin alphabet in Ireland, a system of strokes and notches, which refutes such historical connotations. Friel's later dramas increasingly operate out of the knowledge that the act of political, cultural and linguistic colonisation is not only an issue about the domination of one state and one language over another but is about the ethnocentric and ontological mobilisation in history and culture of the structures of writing.

Reference to Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* refutes any simple English/Irish dualism, however. Spenser's text suggests the likelihood that the cultures of England first acquired Latin letters and learning from the Irish: 'the Saxons of England are said to have theire lettres and learning and learned men, from the Irishe'.[31] This is a condition which Friel dramatises in *The Enemy Within* where the English Oswald acquires the skills of writing through the Celtic Christian monasticism of Columba upon Iona. Writing may be centred in human rationalist impulses or in groups who exhibit a propensity towards such a world-view.

Inflicting Education

To return to the material level, Friel's Field Day dramas exhibit an awareness that history cannot be written without the analysis of ideology and institution, including the analysis of the act and practice of writing itself as an historical and social as well as a literary practice. Friel's chosen moment of history in *Translations*, the Ordnance Survey of Ireland which anglicised place-names, is also the point of introduction of an English schooling system into Ireland, each signifying the political and cultural loss of the Gaelic language to a print culture with a fully institutionalised state apparatus. The Irish space is rewritten by technological and textual power - for which writing is an extraordinary servant - but the deeper recognition that *Translations* makes is that

these very practices of technology, text and writing which are redescribing the space become actually rooted in the space through the institution of education.

G. H. Bantock argues that the spur to modernity and its arbitrating institution is education and it is within empiricism that the beginning of 'the modern bourgeois faith in the efficacy of education' within a new cultural order is located.[32] In *Translations*, the issues are codified in the opposition between Hedge-School and National School. The Hedge-School, which supplies the setting for the drama, represents a response by the native Irish to Penal Laws imposed by an imperialist England in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. P. J. Dowling describes how the Penal Code banned wholesale Catholic education in Ireland, though he adds 'it may be said to have been illegal from almost the time of the Reformation'.[33] The Hedge-School was a surreptitious form of education which took its name from the practice of teaching in the open-air or in out-houses.

It was only with the advent of a State system of education in 1832 that the Hedge-School became increasingly redundant. The Catholic Emancipation Act, which effectively ended the colonial Penal Laws in Ireland, was passed in England in 1829 and the National Schools Act for Ireland was passed in 1832. By setting his play in *Baile Beag*/Ballybeg in 1833, Friel creates a dialectic between Gaelic Hedge-School and English National School, the latter 'an institution of primary education, established by the British Government [in Ireland] in conformity with its educational policies and cultural objectives'.[34] Bridget details the new government regulations for National School attendance:

> ...you start at the age of six and you have to stick it until you're twelve at least...And every child from every house has to go all day, every day, summer or winter. That's the law...And from the very first day you go, you'll not hear one word of Irish spoken. You'll be taught to speak English and every subject will be taught through English.

Educational policy in the National Schools was directed towards linguistic and cultural translation of the Irish populace into an English speech-system.

Foucault insists that institutions must be analysed from the stand-point of power relations. It is through the material and institutional formation of space that the forces of socialisation, discipline and repression are diversely 'inflicted'.[35] The new school becomes a *locus* of the official system of power which constitutes the colonial relationship between England and Ireland. The practices and processes of schooling are made up of an ensemble of knowledges and regulations which in Foucault's analysis of a history about education would constitute the mechanism and the centres through which the force of an English state acts.

Colonisation is recognised as not only being about external agencies politically occupying and discursively encoding Ireland and the Irish, it is also about the material reordering and rearranging of the geographical space-empirically, capitalistically and educationally. The new National School building represents the means by which the vision of the external agencies becomes instituted culturally into Ireland: that is the institutionalisation of an enlightenment rationalism which services the economic and social practices of a rationalist, materialist society. It is from this perspective that *education* and *colonialism* are distinctly linked in the historical imagination of Heaney and Friel. What *Translations* illustrates is that in the context of Ireland, educational reform represents not a programme of liberalisation but an evolution from a military and political to a cultural and linguistic colonialism. Friel's drama acts as contemporary witness to the historically organised discursive inscription of Ireland in and through education, writing, print and text.

Striking Cathleen Ni Hoolihan Dumb

Past and future become formulated in Irish history in the opposition between orality and literacy. Pine notes that *Translations* 'presses into service the fact that while there was a literate culture it was predominantly verbal rather

than written'.[36] Initiating an imagery of the wounded state of the language and culture, the drama begins with the lame Gaelic tutor, Manus, giving tuition to the speech-impeded Sarah, a practice described and acted out in graphic detail, 'get your tongue and your lips working'. Sarah is immediately constituted in the practice of verbalising the word, intent upon orally naming in Gaelic her name and place of origin, Sarah Johnny Sally from *Bun na hAbhann*. Sarah's repeated effort to speak her female and Gaelic identity is a function of the ritual of naming, the *caerimonia nominationis* which defines and grounds character and cultural identity in the play. Her refreshed verbal and oral capacities are verified by Maire's commendation of her father's vocal capacities: 'Wasn't your father in good voice last night?'.

But the situation begins to reverse as the colonial drama unfolds. Sarah's birthplace, *Bun na hAbhann*, becomes the subject of Owen and Yolland's translation. They dismiss the Anglo-Irish names of Owenmore and Binhone and then reject the anglicisation to Bunowen: 'that's neither fish nor flesh', and finally settle 'quite arbitrarily on Burnfoot, which bears no relevance to anything'.[37] The name is neither Irish nor English in its reference - a sign without any culturally signified. In the wake of Bridget's comment upon the new National School where 'You'll be taught to speak English and every subject will be taught through English', Sarah is reduced to dumbness once again, able to only grunt and mime, symbolic primal gestures which signify a silencing of language and culture. In the final act of the play, with Manus having departed the locale and under intimidatory questioning by Lancey, Sarah falls silent, unable to speak her Gaelic identity, 'a Cathleen Ni Houlihan' suggests Seamus Heaney, 'struck dumb by the school of modernity'.[38] Sarah's home-place has been erased from the Irish mental-map, affirming a drying up, a silence rather than any form of relocation.

Sarah is framed within an Irish mythology of a feminine Ireland, dramatising the narrative of a fading Gaelic orality. In direct contrast is the figure of Maire who embraces the cultural and linguistic shift in world-view and world-action. Steiner remarks that the English language seems to embody for so many young people in the world, 'the 'feel' of hope of material advance, of scientific and empirical procedures'.[39] Hence Maire's ambition to learn English as exemplified in her applied study of the geographical maps of England and America, and her desire to emigrate to improve her material living conditions. But indicative of the subtle ironies which pervade the play, it is Maire who periodically refers to the sweet smell of potato blight. A catastrophic event in Ireland's history, the Famine was to bring in its wake fundamental changes in economy, culture and language - not least with reference to the concerns of the play, large-scale migration and an acceleration in the decline of Gaelic. The pressures of the historical forces Friel identified within *Translations* are prismatically focussed upon the Ireland of 1833 and the village of *Baile Beag*.

The sexual and marital imagery symbolise cultural breakdown. The absence of Hugh's wife, Caitlin, the dumbness and spinsterhood of Sarah whose desire for Manus is not reciprocated, the failure of marriage as a consequence of Maire's betrayal of the Gaelic Manus for the Englishman, Yolland, represent the lack of regeneration. The Oedipally lame Manus epitomises the wounded phallus which cannot regenerate at the cultural level. Hugh's marriage to the now-dead Caitlin - another of the species of Cathleen Ni Houlihan - is remembered at the moment of the 1798 uprising against English rule. Hugh recalls himself and Jimmy Jack as regenerative 'gods' on the spring morning they strode across the 'fresh, green land' - yet they failed to join in the uprising. He has a pint instead and then returns to Ballybeg. Hugh talks of a spirited and spiritual people, but is too often drunk, suave, charming or inactive to teach in

the national school, itself a form of acquiescence, the further twist being that he then doesn't get the job, just as he didn't fight in '98. He and Jimmy index a spiritual and political failure to resist, energies sapped by the forces at work in history: 'such was the course ordained by fate' are Hugh's final words on history in the drama.

The social and mythic absence of the maternal spouse reinforces the feminine pattern that frames the drama. Says Manus on his move to the margins: 'I remember Mother saying she had cousins somewhere away out in Ennis peninsula'. Maire invokes a contrary cultural as well as domestic mother to that of Manus: 'We should all be learning English, that's what my mother says'. This represents a different maternal ethic - not one which defends indigenous life and its mythopoeic vision, but a historically pragmatic mother who urges acceptance of the new material reality. Maire's projected departure to America suggests the challenge to the guiding mythic principle in Gaelic consciousness.

Ravishing Ireland

The force in opposition to a disintegrative matriarchal, feminine Ireland in *Translations* is the patriarchal, masculine England. Yolland's vision of Ireland represents what Foucault names as a heterotopia, a space of illusion or compensation, a real space that acts as a screen on which the *other* is subliminally projected. Foucault wonders if certain colonies have not played 'on the level of the general organisation of terrestrial space' the role of heterotopes. I am thinking, for example, of the Puritan societies that the English had founded in America'.[40] Foucault is referencing here the way in which desire or anxiety is projected onto space territorially, what Said calls in *Orientalism*, 'a sort of surrogate or even underground self'.[41] In Said's view of

such projections, the Orient is an invention by the coloniser which strengthens identity or dissipates anxiety in the coloniser.

Lancey and Yolland can be read through these paradigms, as their behaviour towards Ireland and the Irish exhibits fantasies of the demonic and the erotic, respectively. Yolland's father and Lancey, in effect, are an instance of the imperial father - a figure whom the Oedipalised Yolland is unable to confront in any personal or cultural form. He says he couldn't 'face Father' when he missed his boat to India and so joined up for service in Ireland. The anima of the English male does not have the bravura and strength to face or integrate its animus. No internal Oedipal overthrow of the imperialist drive is possible. The feminine, natural, creative energies which Yolland vouchsafes are in exile in his own land.

In Ireland, he falls in love with the Irish place, the Irish language and with an Irish woman; a Hibernophile, his desire is awoken by a nature, culture and femininity of which his own culture has been internally dispossessed. It is a form of Eros which is projected onto the Irish domain of culture seeing in Ireland an anima unavailable in England, while for Lancey, that anima arouses in him a form of Thanatos, something he neurotically seeks to destroy. In a phallic imagery of imperialist aggression, the Royal Engineers trample down a corn-field, 'Prodding every inch of the ground in front of them with their bayonets'. Militarily and empirically, the British army of soldiers and surveyors take possession of the ground exemplifying Said's comment that 'Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control'.[42] Owen interprets Lancey's threat to clear the 'entire section' as an aggressive masculine intent to 'ravish the whole parish'. It is a trope of English militarism which Heaney utilises in 'Ocean's Love to Ireland' where Heaney rather ironically lyricises upon the literary and linguistic conquest of Ireland. Ralegh's 'broad

Devonshire' overpowers the 'ruined maid' who 'complains in Irish' about her political, cultural and linguistic violation; 'iambic drums/ of English beat the woods' flushing out and putting to the sword Gaelic poets and poesy: 'her poets/ Sink like Onan'.

The Communication Cord: A Tenuous Tenure

Lancey's threatened clearance of the land is loaded with troubling implications for the Irish peasantry of the nineteenth century. R. F. Foster in *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972* records that by the 1830s, the decade in which *Translations* is historically set, rent arrears and evictions began to mount. The problem was severely exacerbated in the following decade during and after the Irish Famine when large-scale evictions took place, often enacted by landlords who were absent and living in England. With its roots in the Latin *evincere*, meaning 'to vanquish utterly', the word has dire connotations which operate at both the political and existential levels in *Translations*. In the drama Yolland pronounces the remapping of the linguistic and epistemological contours of the cultural landscape as 'an eviction of sorts'. Richard Kearney suggestively overlays the epistemological imagery of Heidegger's linguistic 'house of Being'[43] upon the political imagery of eviction to present a history of the colonisation of the interior bearings of a people and a culture.

The bereavement rite at the *'domus lugubris'* (the wake-house) which houses and honours the deceased child of Nellie Ruadh towards the close of the play represents the death of the Gaelic forms of life and its associated language. Referring to the Note-Book which contains the lexicon of an anglicised Irish vocabulary, Hugh offers an image of cultural reconstruction informing Maire 'We must learn to make them our new home'. At the outset of *The Communication Cord*, Tim Gallagher is 'a junior lecturer in linguistics. Without tenure', a trope for his social displacement. He is currently engaged in

researching his Ph.D. thesis entitled 'Discourse Analysis with Particular Reference to Response Cries' and one strand of the dramatic plot concerns Gallagher's attempts to secure tenure and to complete his thesis on linguistics. Through the linguistic hypotheses of Tim Gallagher the text and the drama contain within it a theory of the extent to which the subject is at home or unaccommodated by language and the social order, a condition reified in the naming and meanings attributed by weekend visitants and locals to the traditional rural cottage, what Friel calls in 'Plays Peasant and Unpeasant': 'the most potent sign of "Irishness"'.[44]

Here Friel is at his most earnest in pursuing the agenda of Field Day under whose aegis *The Communication Cord* is produced, testing out the myths and stereotypes which refract identity in a modern Ireland. The potential confusions in modern society and its discourses emerge out of the meeting between histories and myths of a traditional Ireland and the values and practices of a modern Ireland. Declan Kiberd in 'Inventing Irelands' registers the fact that more Irish people now live in towns than in the countryside while Terence Brown describes the changed reality in twentieth-century Ireland in terms of an international trade and EEC membership, circumstances very evident in the play:

> ...an Ireland that sought to define its identity since Independence in the country's past...was to seek to adapt itself to the prevailing capitalist values of the developed world...including membership of the EEC.[45]

At the same time, Ireland is still subject to the effects of powerful rural and national mythologies of Irishness inherited from a turbulent past. A number of appropriating discourses of the rural Irish are identifiable in the historical which emanate from the colonial centres of England and Europe, the discourses of the barbarian and the stage-Irishman, the Rousseauesque noble peasant and the feminising Celticism associated with the thinking of Matthew Arnold. Conversely, there exists a number of resistive discourses which emanate from

within Ireland, the Davisite and 'Irish-Ireland' ideologies of the noble Irish peasant and the disruptive naturalist representation of a more visceral rural peasant life is presented in the dramas of J.M. Synge of which *The Playboy of The Western World* is a notable example.

The valorisation of the discourse of rural Ireland, to use Foucault's conceptual metaphor, becomes greater during the establishment of the Irish Free State. Terence Brown in *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History: 1922-85* describes how a conservative, Catholic middle-class sought to respond to the ex-colonial, material, cultural and political dominance by establishing an ideology of national and cultural authenticity which defined itself against the English inheritance. This resulted in an *Irish Ireland* ideology which drew upon the revivalist discourses of the Independence movement:

> ...newly independent Ireland was enclosed with a repository of myths, images and motifs, literary modes and conventions...a range of thought and feeling that would help confirm national identity and unity.[46]

The essential ideological constituents of tradition, spirituality and nationhood were eminently fulfilled by the discourse of rural Ireland which:

> ...celebrated a version of Irish pastoral where rural life was a condition of virtue as much as it remained an expression of an ancient civilisation, uncontaminated by commercialisation and progress. In so doing they helped to confirm Irish society in a belief that rural life constituted an essential element of an unchanging Irish identity.[47]

The effect was to produce a powerful rural myth of Irishness of the kind spoken by Eamon de Valera in his famous St Patrick's Day broadcast in 1943 of an idyllic rural Ireland and parodied by Keeney in *Volunteers*. It has enclosed within it idioms of nationhood, spiritual essence, historical tradition and continuity.

An Ersatz Ruralism

The group who gather in the rural cottage at Ballybeg are a mixture of locals, citydwellers and EEC foreigners - the human scale of the rural has grown

from the local and parochial to the national and the international. The action takes place in a refurbished traditional thatched cottage stocked with traditional furnishings located in the picturesque landscape of Ballybeg and is replete with a visiting peasant in the form of Nora Dan, the most materially opportunist figure in the drama whom Jack sardonically calls 'the quintessential noble peasant'. From the very outset these rural images of traditional Ireland are enunciated as inauthentic: 'one quickly sees something false about the place. *It is too pat, too* "authentic"'. What is witnessed in the farcical play is a modern rural Ballybeg being subjected to a *full-blown national and international capitalist ideology and* a romantic nationalist discourse which in turn is made subject to the searching scrutiny of a set of sophisticated academic linguistic theories.

As doctor, politician and father, Senator Donovan represents the patriarchal current in Irish bourgeois society, a middle-class conservative who indulges Catholic moralities and Irish Ireland romances. He is cast as an 'amateur antiquarian', a man interested in specific versions of the past, and it is he who recites the cultural revivalist discourse of the pastoral to extol the 'absolute verity' of the cottage. For him the images of rural Ireland are not just picturesque, they speak to the soul as well as to the eye. As part of a residual nationalism he upholds the notion of an organic relationship between place and discourse. The language he uses reveals the influence of Catholic spirituality upon rural piety: the walk along the muddy boreen to the cottage is a 'penance', the cottage itself is 'our first cathedral', the visit to the shrine of the quintessential essence of Irishness a spiritually transcendent experience: 'This transcends all huckstery'. Donovan's fond invocation of the domestic harmonies and homely warmth is cast in an Irish Ireland discourse reminiscent of the image Keeney presents of Leif's household in *Volunteers*:

> The fireplace...is now the heart of the home. That's where we warm ourselves. That's where we cook. That's where we kneel and pray. That's where we gather at night to tell folk-tales and ancient sagas.

The ersatz character of the refurbished cottage betokens, however, the fatuous nature of Donovan's sentimental recovery of antique pieties. The self-revealing moment for Donovan comes at the point at which he accidentally chains himself to the wall where cows were once milked. This is symbolically indicative of the fact that Donovan is fettered to the falsifying and stultifying myths of the Revivalist past. As the sentimental nature of these links become literally apparent to him he reacts with emotional violence to the expression of nationalist platitudes: 'This determined our first priorities! This is our native simplicity! Don't give me that shit'. Under the pressure of adversity the bourgeois emotional indulgence in rural life and in history collapses into angry disparagement. The speaking-subject is in a shallow relationship with the cottage and the environment - the Irish Ireland discourse is exposed as a superficial gloss without contemporary spiritual depth or substance. Donovan's anger ontologically inspires a profanity which breaks down the ersatz sacralism that he has been routinely reciting.

Senator Donovan, however, remains essentially blind to the contradictions inherent in his vision of rural life. While exploiting to the full the conveniences of Euro-capitalism, he seeks to keep intact the illusion of a non-capitalised Irish past, yet the image he idealises is itself a purchased freehold-house in the country. This brings into play Jack McNeilis' relationship to the cottage which is a central issue of the drama. A member of the family who owns the rural cottage in Ballybeg and introduced into the play as a successful and assured barrister who possesses all the confident charms accessible to the modern bourgeois male, he is a capitalist form of 'accommodated man'. His early actions exemplify the authoritative self-possession of a man whose status and identity is defined through the power of the ideologically approved value-system and its concomitant space, roles and discourses.

Jack McNeilis' place in the world of modernity is symbolised by his possession of a motor-bike, the modern technology which has accrued from the technological world of a scientific capitalism, which he bears unhesitatingly into the rural world, and by his possession of a watch, which is a sign of his empiricist and capitalist apprehension of time. The watch also appears in the drama of Hugh O'Neill in *Making History* as a sign of a new mechanistic and rationalist concept of time entering into the historical. O'Neill presents his Protestant wife, Mary Bagenal with 'a new invention - a time-piece you carry around with you. It's called a watch'. David Harvey contextualises the time-piece and the ordering of time within scientific empiricist and Enlightenment thought which 'operated within the confines of a rather mechanical Newtonian vision of the universe'.[48] The clock, watch or chronometer is a mathematical and numerate mechanical device which constructs the world from a scientific rationalist viewpoint. It produces a segmented and linear image of time which is mapped out as practical and utilitarian time, a structuration which Harvey argues is particularly useful to capitalist concepts of temporal structure. Jack's attempt to organise and control events at the cottage to accommodate business and sexual interests is premised upon his attempt to establish a timetable according to which others are to act.

The watch is the instrument of Jack's regulatory order, language is the medium he is prepared to use to exploit the earnest or misplaced sentiments of others in order to gain a personal advantage. He urges Tim to indulge Senator Donovan's romanticisms and paternal feelings for material gain and sexual profit:

> So they drop in here on their way to a political dinner and have a quick look round and Daddy Senator suddenly realises that there's more to you than the stooped, whingeing, trembling, penniless, myopic, part-time junior lecturer without tenure. 'Good heavens, the lad has a noble soul like myself. Good gracious this is a kindred spirit. My blessing on you both.' And her wealth...is safe in your pocket.

Jack's mimicry of the romance discourse alienates the language to produce another knowledge of its meaning as a vacuous form of national piety but reinvests it with a utilitarian falsity compounding the lack of correspondence between speech and the actual state of affairs.

His relationship to the cottage is one that invests commodities with libido. It is anti-romantic in a very cynical, individualistic way. Jack McNeilis appears as a figure on the stage of *The Communication Cord* with the insights of role-play which Skinner and Keeney possess in *The Freedom of the City* and *Volunteers*, but put to work for gain and self-interest rather than featured as a position from which dissent occurs. Kearney describes him as 'a dealer in identities'[49] who sees society itself as a role-playing theatre, space constitutes a stage where bourgeois roles and discourses can be utilised for maximum self-gratification. There is not so much a social reality for Jack as feigning performance in which language itself become the mask which conceals inner motives.

Apart from the romantic rural discourse the most prominent intersection between role, language and desire in the play is in the realm of property and sexuality - areas of obsessive interest for Jack. His very image of the cottage's past is sexualised. He transforms rural implements into sexual instruments utilised in rural bacchanalia: 'That is the flail for ritual orgies on midsummer night - an old and honoured Donegal ritual'. The play subsequently details Jack's succession of weekend sexual schemes and conquests and his willingness to enter freely and deceitfully into the discourses of sexual charm and seduction. Is Jack McNeilis full of life and being or is he the perverse expression of a post-colonial capitalised landscape and thus deathly? This is the question Friel's drama is raising.

Just as the cottage displays a critical animus against the discourses of a falsifying historical romance, so it also displays hostility towards those who would exploit those romanticisms with such utilitarian ease. For the duration of the period in which Tim role-plays the bourgeois identities according to the schemes formulated by Jack, the cottage's hearth, 'the heart of the home', acts with malign intent towards him, repeatedly showering him in smoke from the turf-fire. At the end of the play, Jack McNeilis, the principal architect and chief exploiter of traditional rural authenticity, becomes imprisoned by the chains on the wall. His nefarious and corrupt links with the past are symbolically revenged and, indeed, he is rendered literally powerless, a victim of his own spurious behaviour and specious discourse. He is, finally, unable to act or to speak with credibility. At the moment of the cottage's imminent collapse his urgent warning is ignored.

Donovan and Jack can see the rural elements of life only through the coarsened perceptions of pseudo-antiquarianism or commercial exploitation. The rural cottage is reduced to a *sight* and *site* of possession - detached from the time and place in which it was first made materially, and from the place and time in which it was discursively made - now it has become an artefact of preservation, a sign of how history itself has been reduced to the same status. As such, history and landscape become aesthetic and material commodities for purchase, instruments of possession which can be exploited, utilised, sold and bought for private and personal gain like any other capitalist product, to fulfil selfish utilitarian needs.

The topic of the sale and purchase of the cottage is a constant parlance in the play. Jack, Barney the Banks, Tim, Nora Dan and Donovan are all implicated in the commercial trade of the property. Donovan himself asks of Nora Dan 'What would be the chances of picking up a cottage around here [for] Renewal, Restoration, Fulfilment. Back to the true centre'. Nora Dan is shown

as a mischievous, shrewd, opportunist and sometimes grasping figure, willing to sell her cottage, move in as a sitting-tenant in Jack's cottage, ride the motor-bike, dissolving the romanticism of the peasant and the peasant women in the discourse of an Irish Ireland. Nora Dan's offer to sell her house to Donovan ratifies the play's ironic gloss upon Donovan's idealised perceptions of the rural life, his failure to see that Irish urban and international capitalist values have penetrated the rural, the countryside is as subject to capitalisation as the city. What the cottage offers is a notion of history and place that refuses the ontological sentimentality of Donovan, *the idea that rural life is not involved* with the processes of history and social change.

Friel is revealing the ideological vacuity of the imagined Irelands figured in the image of the cottage. The kind of sacred or animistic landscape which *Translations* mythopoeically imagines as a Gaelic relation to rural locale and which Senator Donovan romantically imagines ceases to operate easily or effectively in a landscape codified as an individualist and commodity space. The image of life which served the cause of Irishness *in the past has become in* contemporary Ireland a fossil of that past, it is a singular case of the making of history which Hugh was so concerned to caution Maire about:

> It is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language...we must never cease renewing those images, because once we do we fossilise.

Mobilising again the insights of George Steiner's *After Babel*, the romantic discourse of rural Ireland and its sense of place represents a fossilised image of the past which is emptied of any depth or resonance. Rural Ireland can no longer be a site where a sense of place can prevail, rather we have a sense of space and time - ordered, shaped, determined by a sensually and metaphysically denuding bourgeois state, patriarchal and Catholic.

The Unaccommodated Woman

Depicting a patriarchy, a system in which men have naturalised their power over women, the play offers representations of space, roles and languages which most accommodate a professional, bourgeois male fraternity. Jack and Donovan play male roles constructed out of a possessively desiring male libido. Their mastery emanates from the power roles, institutions and locales they are socially and ideologically allotted and the discourses that flow from them whereas Tim and the cast of women experience varying degrees of displacement as the roles they play are constructed around and by the solipsism of the male libido. They are subjected to subliminal forms of male control. This is in keeping with John Berger's view that in bourgeois capitalist societies man's presence is 'fabricated through role',[50] it is the *power* he claims to exercise over others. By way of contrast and complement, women's presence is constituted in their *appearance*: '*men act* and *women appear*'.[51] In these terms women are essentially silent, they become the *object* of a male gaze. Women appear in the space, their social role is their appearance, their linguistic role redundant. This is essentially the situation in *The Communication Cord* enunciated by Donovan: 'When you're as young and as beautiful as Madame Giroux, language doesn't matter, does it? Words are superfluous aren't they?'. These are the aestheticised sexual codes of male patriarchy of a piece with the aesthetic codes of Donovan's rural romance. Language is a part of society and is therefore instrumental in exercising power over women. In this view, and it is one which the play largely substantiates, women are not so much *subjects* who speak language as figures who are *subjects* of it and *subject* to it. They become inscribed in the sign-system which codes the will of a bourgeois male ego and desire. George Steiner sees in this contention 'that women and words are analogous media of exchange in the grammar of social life',[52] a construct of a male speech-mythology which is largely determined by the economic and social structures of patriarchy.

The women appear in guises which are essentially sexual and romantic and linguistically spartan, though Claire's appearance in the space exhibits, too, a feminist dimension in that she is a female professional who retains an outsider's sense of intuition and feeling. The character of Claire is important to the play as a figure of *otherness*. She is a woman who essentially stands outside of the speech exchanges in the play and yet, as a university lecturer in an English department who has a specialised knowledge of language, she is in possession of insightful intellectual and cultural powers of comprehension. Introduced into the drama as a 'competent, open, humorous' woman, she represents a form of integrity quite alien to Jack McNeilis. She is not confused, nor does she mistake people's identity, and she is profoundly aware of the deceitful use of speech and its semantic corruptions.

While Claire acts as a destabilising force in the clandestine schemes of the men, she keeps her own speech to a minimum and offers a series of summary insights into the events taking place on the stage by repeating the simple, yet clear and definitive comment upon the speech and actions in the two phrases: 'I understand perfectly.' and 'That's a lie'. Claire recognises that inner meanings and motives are not deposited in the semantic message perceived by the rational intelligence but instead reside in the tonal character of the sentiment as perceived by the intuition. Claire makes clear this distinction between rational and intuitive knowledge: 'I don't know what you're saying either but I think I know what's implicit in it...I feel the reverberations'. There is a mode of ontological expression but it does not live in the domain of a rationalist semantics, but in a discerning intuitive perception of the speech-act and the speaker.

It is in Tim's relation with Claire Harkin and in the process of negotiating the obstacle course of language, role and identity, that Tim

Gallagher comes to recognise that not only does the language of public discourse lack an ontological dimension but that it does not even serve to communicate information of a positivistic nature. The only point at which language transcends the utilitarian function is where exertion of power and maintenance of control breaks down. It is at these moments that the various participants use language which expresses inner emotions in a frank and illuminating way unmediated by role and language masks. This is particularly apparent in the expression of expletives. Senator Donovan, at a moment of powerlessness, chained to the wall, comments on the language of rural romance, 'Don't give me that shit' and later makes a felt metaphysical plea for deliverance from his situation, 'O God, dear God, let me survive this night'. He is about to enter into the dark night of the soul where he is to be tested unsupported by the official structures of role and language. Similarly, when Jack experiences adverse condition which transcend or circumvent his power of control, he vents a deeply-felt misogynistic malice, calling Nora a 'bitch', for example, when she threatens his hedonistic freedoms.

The Grammar of Being

Tim Gallagher is a different kind of male, unable to inhabit the masculine bourgeois sexual and social roles in which he is cast by Jack McNeilis. Tim attempts to collude with Senator Donovan's rural romanticisms, to engage in negotiations for the sale of the cottage and to play the winning suitor for the hand of Susan. As Kearney records, however, Tim 'cannot make the cap of commercial proprietor fit...cannot bring himself to conform to the language games of mercantile deceit'.[53] Tim comes to recognise fully the speciousness of communication, both as a process of information and of conversation. The play's punning titular symbol, 'the communication cord' questions whether language binds people together or does the alarm need sounding on the insincerity of language? Is language a utilitarian medium alone

or is it charged with emotional and spiritual integrity? Reconsidering his thesis, he reflects: 'I may have to rewrite a lot of it. Maybe the units don't matter all that much'. The agreed code is only recognisable as a code within which deceit takes place, so the semantics of the linguistic units become unimportant. Tim ironically ponders 'Maybe silence is the perfect discourse'. In a speech-universe shot through with deception and insincerity, the self can only be fully communicated in the 'grammar of being'[54] expressed through the medium of the body itself.

To exemplify this mode of communication, the play closes with Claire and Tim engaged in a prolonged kiss, what Terry Eagleton calls 'the ultimate self-definition, the most precious and unique mode of being'.[55] As they embrace in this intimate manner, they lean against the fragile support beam. Fittingly for a man who has so corrupted sincerity of speech, Jack's attempt to communicate a sincere warning, 'a response cry', goes unheeded. The moment that Tim takes possession of his own feelings and expresses himself in an intuitive, sensual moment of self-definition, the cottage which houses the charlatan discourses of those in social possession symbolically collapses.

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CHAPTER 3: REWRITING IRELAND

Both Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney envisage a teleology of *language* and *writing* which has been responsive to three epochal movements in western culture, the *Pagus*, *Christianitas and Humanitas*. Friel's history plays construct a paradigm for the cultural imperialism at work in the historical matrix of Ireland: a Catholic asceticism (*The Enemy Within*), English Protestantism and Renaissance Humanism (*Making History*) and Enlightenment secularism (*Translations*), all are portrayed as outstripping the indigenous, pagan, Gaelic culture. In these dramas, education and the structures of writing are invariably the bearers of values and practices of the invasive force passing through the Irish countryside. This brings about the interest in *The Enemy Within* which is an early rehearsal in Friel's *oeuvre* for *Making History* exhibiting the playwright's nascent interest in the historical operation of writing, text and discourse in Ireland's transition from the non-literate world of the *pagus* to the literate complexities of the world of post-structuralism with which *The Communication Cord* engages.

Marshall McLuhan's scheme of language development is germane to Friel and Heaney's structuring of Irish history. The three chapters in *Understanding Media* entitled 'The Spoken Word', 'The Written Word' and 'The Printed Word' construct a history of language premised upon societal transition from an archaic oral culture to one technologically literate in the word:

> The alphabet (and its extension into typography) made possible the spread of the power that is knowledge and shattered the bonds of tribal man, thus exploding him into an agglomerate of individuals.[1]

W. J. Ong in *Orality and Literacy*, scrutinises the historical for the way in which writing has always been a technology 'calling for the use of tools and other

equipment: styli or brushes or pens, carefully prepared surfaces such as paper, animal skin, strips of wood, as well as inks or paints, and much more'.[2] In the quasi-literate culture of the Ballybeg hedge-school portrayed in *Translations*, Bridget writes upon a slate worn by usage: 'D'you hear the whistles on this 'aul slate? Sure nobody could write on an 'aul slippery thing like that'. This image reveals the developing mismatch in Gaelic culture between technology and writing and conveys how difficult it is to write Gaelic onto history; she follows this commentary by chalking upon the slate the headline: 'It's easier to stamp out learning than to recall it'. Writing is possessed of a sociality and a technology which has distinct cultural histories. In *Translations*, the chirographic English culture comes to eclipse an Irish culture structured predominantly in orality.

Friel's concern for writing and its technologies is evident in his first major play, *The Enemy Within*, written in the late fifties. He contrives a play which dramatises the earliest incursions of the structures of writing into Gaelic culture - on the back of the technologies of pen and parchment. Seamus Deane, in his survey *A Short History of Irish Literature*, begins his account of the Irish literary tradition with reference to the advent of writing in Ireland: 'The art of writing came to Ireland with Christianity in the fifth century'.[3] Deane's discourse is essentially liberal humanist: writing is an *art*, monastic scribes textualise oral lore and mythology through the mechanism of writing in an act of preservation. Brian Friel's drama, *The Enemy Within*, is more sceptical, posing the possibility of attenuation rather than preservation, a process of cultural denigration as much as a cultural accumulation. He figures writing as a *practice* and the play exhibits Friel's earliest concerns for the displacing technologies of literacy, learning, discourse and representation which constitute the material and signifying structures of writing in history and culture.

Writing, in fact, was already implicated in the cultures of Ireland before fifth century Christianity. Named after the Celtic god Ogmios, the ogham alphabet,

the oldest Celtic writing system known, employed a system of strokes and notches by which boundary and memorial stones were marked. The script was already in use though too cumbersome to serve as a medium for extended texts.[4] What was new in the fifth century was the Latin alphabet, the introduction of parchment into books and the context of a spreading Christianity. In his chapter 'Irish Monastic Schools and Anglo-Irish Monasteries', P. J. Dowling recognises St Columba, the protagonist of Friel's earliest history play, *The Enemy Within*, as an important figure in the establishment of monastic schooling in Ireland:

> The school of St.Enda on the outermost island of the Aran group off the coast of Galway, was also a fifth century foundation, whither came to study and to learn the monastic way of life...St Columba, the apostle of Scotland...[5]

Friel sets his play within Columba's Celtic Christian monastic foundation on the island of Iona, specifically detailing the emergent role of scribe and scholastic text in Irish culture. On display in Columba's austere cell throughout the play is a 'collection of scrolls - the equivalent of a library'. The drama opens with Caornan, the scribe, working assiduously on a scroll. Attention is drawn to the developing power and authority of the written text by means of Caornan's accident with his writing materials and Columba's presentation of a replacement instrument which carries the symbolic weight of the patriarch's authority, 'a royal pen for a royal scribe'. By way of contrast, Columba's brother, Eoghan, is non-literate, steeped in a tradition of Gaelic orality. The stage direction composes Eoghan's relationship to the scrolls: 'Takes one down. Tries to read it. Cannot. Puts it back'. His admiration for these scrolls invest them with a totemistic authority, 'Powerful altogether. Powerful'. The drama symbolically discloses a non-literate oral Gaelic culture becoming disempowered by a chirographic technology allied to the jurisdiction of a doctrinal Catholicism.

Engendered in the figure of Columba is not only the extraneous conflict between Gaelic and Christian systems of authority but also the internal conflict between a vigorous Gaelic sensibility and a Christian asceticism. Columba's

allegiance to Gaelic family, tribe, ancestry and land is tested and finally broken by the burden of what Heaney calls 'a Christian *disciplina*' which is brought to bear upon 'a Celtic *pagus*'[6] - the narrative plot, indeed, of *Buile Suibhne*, Heaney's translation of the mythic tale of a Celtic Ireland being Christianised. Columba, for his part, comes to feel

> ...burdened with the strong, active body that responds to the whistle of movement, the flight of the sail, the swing of the axe, the warm breath of a horse beneath, the challenge of a new territory.

The visceral animal spirits of Columba which accrue from his cultural tradition and racial stock are made subject to the rigourous morality of the new Christian order. The penitential desire of Columba is to 'Crush this violent Adam into subjection'. Here in *The Enemy Within*, Friel locates the source of a new discourse, a new mythology, ascetic, puritan and restraining which construes the body and the appetites as forms of temptation and sinfulness.

New cultural discourse and new representations of identity and practice, distributed through an appropriating culture of writing, mobilise the ideology and power of the intrusive Christian Church. The chirographic victory of an ecclesiastical doctrinal and an English cultural authority is evident in the plot outcome which witnesses the reinstatement of the lost Englishman Oswald into the Celtic Christian community of Iona. Significantly, it is his purpose to become a 'scribe' in the monastic community. This reading of Oswald brings into play his geographical and cultural origins, a monk from the south of England. His learning, English speech, hieratic Latin and manners are mocked by the other, mainly Irish, monks in a discourse reminiscent of an English *civitas* and an Irish *barbaritas*:

> Great rustic louts who mock my accent and my table manners and the way I pronounce the Latin -...And their endless joking and camaraderie and coarse humour so that if you made a serious comment, they pounce on it and turn it to ridicule.

The value systems in opposition here are those of a rugged camaraderie and a mannered individualism, an opposition internalised in the spiritual conflict St Columba experiences between his intemperate Gaelic self and the life of monkish

moderation. Columba's own irascible nature becomes physicalised when he slaps Oswald on the face in a fit of pique, an unchristian act of incivility which exiles Oswald from the monastic community. Oswald reappears after Columba's denial of Irish tribalism divulging his role as a surrogate son displacing Columba's Gaelic lineage. The locus of discourse is shifting from Gaelic to Christian and English centres of power. It is Catholicism and civil learning reified and mobilised by the culture of writing which are the emergent ideologies and practices in the historical, a transformational paradigm which frames the majority of Friel's plays.

Friel's own text, however, puts Columba's submission to Biblical authority to work subversively, using the Christian text to symbolise the schism created in Irish culture and the Irish psyche by the new Christianity. Columba's breach of faith with family and tribal lineage is signalled in his recitation of Biblical parable: 'I came to set a man at variance with [his family]...a man's enemies shall be those of his own household'. Here is an early instance of Friel's image of the house as a trope for the restructuring of Gaelic society and the re-orientating of Gaelic sensibility within more ascetic and rationalist systems of belief. Christian intrusion into the Irish psyche marks the beginning of the building of the empire within for which the play's eponym- the 'enemy within' - may be construed as a sign.

From the *Pagus* to the Poststructuralist

The Enemy Within appears as a notable rehearsal for Friel's Field Day dramas which illustrate how writing as a practice and institution becomes mobilised in history and penetrates into Irish culture on the back of military and political campaigns - though by the time Friel writes *Making History* he is in possession of a much more sophisticated linguistic discourse than that of *The Enemy Within*. F. C. McGrath details the debt to George Steiner in 'Irish Babel: Brian Friel's *Translations* and George Steiner's *After Babel*' in bringing Friel closer to poststructuralist linguistics and historiography. What Steiner offers Friel is a

theoretical position which argues that the 'great mass of the past as we experience it is a verbal construct'[7] which Friel has encoded in *Translations* in the axiom of history formulated by Hugh, 'it is not the literal past, the "facts" of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language'. It is a position which recognises that material reality and the past is always discursively encoded - a condition he explicates through the Irish Ireland discourse in *The Communication Cord*, and that encoding is always provisional and subject to alterity.

In *Making History* history is again constituted by Friel as a territorial occupation which is geographical and discursive - once more witting of Foucault's maxim that the study of the military campaign, the territory, the colony as a matrix of political, social, cultural and economic organisation can release an understanding of how groups 'actually come to inscribe themselves both on a material soil and within forms of discourse'.[8] From this perspective, *Making History* sets up a tripartite paradigm of native Gaelic, English Protestant and European Roman Catholic cultures gathered in military, political, cultural and discursive contest in Ireland in the epoch of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. In the dramatic plot which charts the demise of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, Friel portrays the collapse of Gaelic culture and the competition that ensues between an English Protestant and European-Irish Roman Catholic hegemonies - each with their own cultural institutions - for the political control, ideological and discursive interpellation and allegiance of the defeated Gaelic peoples. By turning the gaze of a post-colonial historicicity upon the consequent colonialist and anti-colonialist versions of the past, *Making History* constitutes the playwright's most deconstructive analysis of authority, writing, text and discourse.

Making an Irish Geography

The colonial project to which *Making History* gives witness is an earlier and more originary military and discursive project to that elaborated in *Translations*. In

keeping with Soja's axiom, the making of history is very frequently the making of geography, the drama depicts the manner in which military activity in Ireland, headed up by the English Bagenals, Staffordshire Protestants who have planted themselves in Newry, converts to a material remaking of the territory. The Bagenals have established a country estate made in the image of the English landscape:

> ...that bog land away to the left of the pond. We drained it and ploughed it and fenced it, and then planted a thousand trees there in four separate areas: apple and plum and damson and pear. Henry had them sent over from Kent.

Mary Bagenal's description of her landed estate describes the agricultural planting and the material cultural projection of English life onto the foreign physical and cultural Gaelic Catholic landscape. What is being witnessed here is the earliest inscription of the English planter upon the material soil of Ireland, transforming the territory into an English colony.

The Latin *colonia* referred to the agricultural cultivation and plantation of the ground, but was also applied to the cultural cultivation and plantation of foreign lands, the two activities being mutually compatible. Max Weber uses the agricultural metaphor of plantation to describe the territorial rooting of capitalism by Protestant groups historically, referring to the 'Calvinist diaspora' as 'the seed-bed of capitalism'.[9] Mary Bagenal's Protestant work and commercial ethics are central to her vision of how the Irish landscape should be fashioned. The spirit of capitalism is generated out of Protestant industry, order and the commodification of nature which feature as the key tenets of the Bagenal's discourse and practice. Idealisation of the *natural* economy of English Protestant culture is evident in the domesticated and commercial landscapes of herb and vegetable gardens, and the farming of bees and chickens which are translated into the commodity sale of honey and eggs; Mary Bagenal enthuses at the production and commercial enterprise of her family in selling 'about four thousand pounds of honey last year' from their hundred or so bee-hives.

Territorialising Discourse: The Civilian and the Barbarian

Edward Said's analysis of the representation of the Orient in *Orientalism* is specifically interested in viewing the Orient as a discourse which is largely the product of European imperialist invention. His analysis foregrounds the territorial and geographical dimensions of discourse in imperialist practice, exhibiting a powerful awareness of how the making of geography is linked to the making of history:

> We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities - such locales, regions, geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made...the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that has given it reality and presence in and for the West.[10]

In *Writing Ireland*, Cairns and Richards argue that Said's analysis of the production of Oriental discourse is analogous with the production of Ireland within English colonial discourses, as in the nineteenth century example of an English discourse on Celticism. They cite Declan Kiberd who has gone as far as to argue 'The notion "Ireland" is largely a fiction created by the rules of England in response to specific needs at a precise moment in British history'.[11]

In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* Stephen Greenblatt offers insight into the cooperative territorial and discursive construction of English identity in the Renaissance period. The project, he claims, was premised on developing myths of self-hood and nationhood for the home-ground of England while simultaneously developing on the site of foreign ground 'a perception of the not-self, of all that lies outside, or resists or threatens identity'.[12] Taking their cue from Greenblatt, Cairns and Richards in *Writing Ireland* point to the Renaissance epoch as the era in which an emergent English state and culture begins to *write* Ireland into a discourse of incivility and barbarism against which England defined itself as dignifying agent of civilised order.

R. F. Foster comments on the number of English commentators at work in writing early ethnographies about the Irish, observers whose writings, he suggests, 'created the image of Elizabethan Ireland for their contemporaries, Spenser, Moryson, Dymmok, Germon and Payne'.[13] Seamus Heaney's poem 'Traditions' in *Wintering Out* alludes to the penetration of indigenous Gaelic culture by the English language at the time of the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland through reference to Spenser and Shakespeare. Spenser's writing features in *Making History* as an index of an expanding English hegemony consequent upon the defeat of the Gaelic order at Kinsale:

> ...portions of another book are being circulated and it seems the English government is paying a lot of attention to it. Written by an Englishman called Spenser who used to have a place down near the Ballyhouras mountains in County Cork...anyhow this Spenser was burned out in the trouble after the battle of the Yellow Ford.

In Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* Irenius is already arguing that 'everie parishe should be forced to keep one Pettie scolemaster', to 'bringe upp theire children in the first rudymentes of lettres...instruct them in grammar, and in the principles of science'.[14] Seeing 'brutishe behavior' in the adults, he promotes the case for English civility cogitating 'is it possible that an *Englishman*, brought up naturally in such sweet civility as England affords could find such liking in the barbarous rudeness [i.e. the customs of the Native Irish] that he should forget his own nature?'.[15]

In Mary Bagenal's speech about Irish culture, the colonial realm is configured as a field of confrontation based upon difference in social customs, religious values, moral behaviour and patterns of economy, couched in the language of civility and barbarism which harbours the desire to dispossess and dominate the other:

> Yes, I know they have their colourful rituals and their interesting customs and their own kind of law. But they are not civilised. And how you can never trust them - how treacherous and treasonable they are - and steeped in religious superstition...And a savage people who refuse to cultivate the land...they are doomed because civility is God's way...and because superstition must yield before reason.

The ordering and organising of the landscape as farmland, garden and estate is spoken of by Mary Bagenal as a 'reclamation'. She opines, 'You talk about 'pastoral farming - what you really mean is neglect of the land. And a savage people who refuse to cultivate the land God gave us have no right to that land'. A culture-nature compact is framed in which the bogland of Ireland represents a primordial and primitive condition of life set against a dynamic of improvement and progress borne by the humanising and civilising English. The coloniser settles the terrain, orders and institutionalises it according to its political and cultural vistas, codes it in discourse according to its own epistemological and ontological disposition.

The culture-nature nexus is the key trope of English civility, furnishing the social order of Renaissance England with an image of its 'natural' superiority, as Terry Eagleton realises in his study of Shakespearian imagery:

> Nature is no mere 'supplement' to civilisation, art, culture, language...but it is internal to its very design. If Nature is always cultural, then a particular culture can always be seen as natural.[16]

Operating out of a nature-culture-race paradigm, Henry Bagenal figures the elopement of his sister Mabel *with the Gael, Hugh O'Neill, as an act of* miscegenation:

> ...he's [Bagenal] written to the Queen 'I am deeply humiliated and ashamed that my blood, which my father and I have often shed in repressing this rebellious race, should now be mingled with such a treacherous stock.'

The biological language of race is put to work as a language of nationhood. Through this linguistic slippage culture becomes discursively fixed in the blood. The language of race is additionally subjected to the metaphorical possession of cultivated nature - the imagery of horticulture. Thus civilised breeding is inscribed in imperialist discourse as a natural quality of Englishness, polarised from the natural barbarism of Irishness, the racial-cultural process of self-fashioning described by Greenblatt.

In analysing the perceptual dualism constructed by imperial peoples, Jan Mohamed in *"Race", Writing and Difference* proposes that the barbarian/civility dialectic is best understood 'through the economy of...the manichean allegory'.[17] Tony Crowley argues in *The Politics of Discourse* that the imagery of the barbarous 'is an important feature in the economy of inclusion and exclusion',[18] a condition which Mary Louise Pratt pursues in her essay 'Scratches on the Face of the Country'. She registers the opinion that descriptive ethnography is 'a very familiar, widespread form of "othering"'; the portrait of manners and customs 'a normalising discourse whose work is to codify difference, to fix the Other'.[19]

At the moral and metaphysical levels, the distinctions are between good and evil, dignity and decorum, accord and depravity. The carnivalesque behaviour of the young Gaelic man and woman, 'boisterous laughter, shouting, horseplay and a rapid exchange of Irish between a young man and woman', is offered through the signifiers of barbarism ('savage' and 'bog'), as a sign of amoral and primitivistic conduct. Hugh's customary practice of polygamy is formulated in the even more emphatic language of metaphysical depravity. Asks Mary Bagenal of Mabel:

> Do you know what people call him? The Northern Lucifer - the Great Devil - Beelzebub. Hugh O'Neill is evil incarnate.

There is a dual process here, of demonising the Irish by inscription within a discourse of Satanic evil, but also a projection and displacement of the demonic within the English psyche onto the Irish. Arguably, England is becoming a Protestant, humanist culture suppressing its rituals and iconography of the demonic and projecting its shadow onto other racial groups and territories.

In Said's view of such projections, the invention of barbarity by the coloniser strengthens identity or dissipates the anxiety of the coloniser. The discourse of the civilian represses its own dark side, transforming violent action from a vice into a virtue, as Mary Bagenal's morally righteous claim attests:

> You forgot that almost single-handed he [Sir Henry Bagenal] tamed the whole of County Down and County Armagh and brought order and prosperity to them And God blessed his great endeavours.

The hegemonic assumption that there is an understandable relationship between civilisation and English Protestantism formulates a speech which defends the speaker from the knowledge of his/her own barbarism, that would otherwise undermine the rightness of the moral mission. The displacement of the knowledge of colonial violence as barbaric is raised to awareness in the play by the reciprocal description of Henry Bagenal - who calls Hugh O'Donnell the 'Butcher O'Donnell - as the 'Butcher Bagenal', and inscribing him within the signification of the barbarian:

> Raiding and plundering with a new troop of soldiers over from Chester - the way you'd blood greyhounds. Slaughtered and beheaded fifteen families.

The blood of barbarism is on the hands of the civilising invader. The manifest discourse of civility can be recognised within Foucault's framework as being 'no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say',[20] the repressive presence in the discourse of civility is the signification it ascribes the barbarian.

In The Territory of the Civilian

At the personal level, it is Hugh O'Donnellwho most expansively represents this cultural categorisation of the Gaelic personality and character. His persona is shaped by a series of non-rational signifiers which pertain to the emotions and the instincts: excitable, impatient, capricious, contentious and humorous. The topics of his speech: women, sex and drink, animal breeding and theft, tribal and colonial warfare, and the modes of his persona: adventurer, drinker, womaniser, warrior and jester, evince the libidinous and violatory energies which flow from his individuated cultural practice. Defined outside of the parameters of reason, his speech - and the Gaelic forms of discourse it represents - is colourful, colloquial and carnivalesque, displaying a tendency to fictionalise and dramatise within anecdote and jest. In the gaze and discourse of a colonising Elizabethan England, this expression of Irish character is translated as barbarous speech and unruly behaviour.

O'Neill places the non-rational - transformed in the civilian discourse to the *irrational* - disposition of another Gaelic chieftain, Maguire, in an oppositional relationship to the 'rational' temperament of the civilised English statesman, Henry Bagenal:

> It really is a nicely balanced equation. The old dispensation - the new dispensation. My reckless, charming, laughing friend, Maguire - or Our Henry. Impulse, instinct, capricious genius, brilliant improvisation - or calculation, good order, common sense, the cold pragmatism of the Renaissance mind.

Although O'Neill immediately qualifies this distinction as a 'cliche' of 'Caricatured national types', the conceptual exclusivity of the two cultural conditions, pagan impulse against Renaissance rationalism, prevails throughout the play as a conflict between 'two deeply oppositional civilisations'.

The powerful social, intellectual and discursive base of Renaissance Humanism in England is established in the drama through the reminiscences of Hugh O'Neill, and operates as a territorialising in England of a social condition and knowledge which is mobilised in colonial discourse by proposing the Irish as the barbarian counterpart to the civilised Englishman. The values of an emergent English humanism are partly borne by Hugh O'Neill who, as Margaret Mac Curtain states, was in historical fact 'brought by Deputy Sidney to England to be educated'.[21] Mary Bagenal, a New English settler, points to Hugh's distinctiveness in this regard, 'Hugh is different - Hugh was educated in England.' Hugh expands on the fact of his education amongst the nobility of England:

> ...as a boy I spent nine years in England where I was nursed at the very wellspring of that new order - think of all those formative years in the splendid houses of Leicester and Sidney and indeed at the Court itself - hence the grand accent, Mary.

Penshurst, the family seat of Sir Henry Sidney, the Lord Deputy of Ireland who 'came to be regarded as the best colonial administrator of his time'[22] was the subject of Ben Jonson's country-house poem 'To Penshurst'. The poem and the genre celebrates country-house life during its transitional stage from feudalistic to

high-bourgeois patterns of life within the mythos of classical pastoral, as Raymond Williams points out in *The Country and the City*:

> The Renaissance adaption of the classical modes of pastoral excises living tensions...in the interests of a new kind of society, that of a developing agrarian capitalism.[23]

Hugh evokes the mythic ethos of this emergent English form of society in the Garden of England: 'It's the summers I remember and the autumns, in Kent, in the family seat at Penshurst. And the orchards: and the deerpark; and those enormous fields of wheat and barley'.

Just as Yolland, the bearer of Romantic humanism to Ireland, speaks of the French Revolution as the beginning of a new epoch of Enlightenment and secular capitalism in *Translations*, Sir Henry Sidney is now cast as the English bearer of a Renaissance Humanist style of discourse commensurate with a distinct change taking place in the historical matrix:

> And every evening after dinner Sir Henry would pose a topic for discussion: *Travel - Seditions and Troubles - Gardens - Friendship and Loyalty - Good Manners - The Planting of Foreign Countries*...And Sir Henry would tease out the ideas and guide the conversation around imperceptibly but very skilfully so that by the time we rose from the table he had moulded the discourse into a well-rounded and formal essay on whatever the theme was.

The social condition is one of civility, dramatically realised through the centrality of the dining-room table, a communal image of social decorum and leisured intimacy and the measured thought and speech of the assembly. The social occasion is essentially a discursive occasion in which the form, styles, themes and epistemology of English upper-class speech are delineated, a dramatic attempt by Friel, to use Foucault's words, 'to map the first surfaces of a discursive emergence'.[24] Following Foucault's definition of discourse as a 'system of dispersion of objects, types of statements, concepts, thematic choices',[25] the discourse evident here is one which is intellectually mannered, ideologically selective, stylistically formal, deploying a language of erudition within highly structured forms. The discursive formation falls into the Foucauldian category of the 'classical *episteme*', a rationalist and humanist form of knowing and speaking which prizes intellectual reason above

all. Hence the fashioning being described in O'Neill's speech is that of a rationally ordered self living within a cultured and civilised community.

The social dynamic is one of transition figured in the same terms as Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, a refashioning of the self and society within a new cultural formation using the *modus operandi* of writing, education and discourse. Recalls Hugh of his evenings at the dinner-table:

> I was only a raw boy at the time but I was conscious not only that new ideas and concepts were being explored and fashioned but that I was being explored and fashioned at the same time.

It is of a piece with Erasmus' Renaissance Humanist ideology that the education of *humanitatis* would reform society: '*"Homine non nascuntur sed fingitur*" ("Men are not born but fashioned")'. That, asserts Bantock, 'is fundamental to Erasmus's educated thought'.[26]

The Weapon of Culture

The military and political defeat of O'Neill at Kinsale is followed by a linguistic and discursive submission to English cultural forms. O'Neill's submission to the Queen of England is written in the circumlocutory, latinate style of executive English speech, signifying political and discursive acquiescence:

> I, Hugh O'Neill, by the Queen of England, France and Ireland...do with all true and humble penitency, prostrate myself at the royal feet...imploring her gracious commiseration and appealing only to her princely clemency.

Not only does O'Neill's style of address acknowledge the imperium of English forms of utterance but also explicitly yields to the ideological significations of English forms of discourse - of the civilian and the barbarian:

> Particularly, will I help in abolishing all barbarous Gaelic custom which are the seeds of all incivility - I will endeavour to erect civil habitations.

The image of 'civil habitations' offers a further instance of Friel's use of accommodation as a trope for the process of cultural displacement, the issue here being that of the rehabilitation of the Irish within English cultural practice, value and discourse. Similarly, though in mythic vein, Seamus Heaney's fable of Irish

colonisation grants the power of the 'sky-born and royal' Hercules over the native Antaeus who is raised up into the humanist light of the intellect:

> Hercules has the measure
> of resistance and black powers
> feeding off the territory.
> Antaeus, the mould hugger,
>
> is weaned at last:

Heaney's fabulous rendition of Elizabethan conquest reveals the mythic struggle in the dynamics of English colonisation of Ireland.

A mythic equivalence to Heaney's paradigm of conquest is to be found in Shakespeare's post-Elizabethan drama, *The Tempest*. The drama has been read by a number of contemporary critics through a colonialist ideology then developing in England. Caliban and Antaeus have an equivalence in their primitivistic earth-bound relationship to a feminised isle. In his poem 'Sybil' in *Field Work*, Heaney plays the role of an Irish Caliban detecting in the Irish landscape the legacies of imperial disturbance: 'Our island is full of comfortless noises'. Caliban experiences a colonisation of his being and his island by an alien culture: 'You taught me language, and my profit on't/ Is I know how to curse'. He contests Prospero's possession of the island: 'This island's mine, by Sycorax, my mother,/ Which thou taks't from me'. The source of Prospero's power is in the bookish humanist culture which partakes of the Herculean principle. Two of the roles collapsed in the figure of Prospero are those of playwright and educator well read in the texts of a liberal humanist culture as he indicates in the recollection of his youth in Milan: 'the liberal arts...being all my study'. Caliban's plot of rebellion reveals the power of a humanist learning: 'Remember/ First to possess his books, for without them/ He's a sot, as I am, nor have not/ One spirit to command. They all do hate him as rootedly as I./ Burn his books'. Prospero's humanist enlightenment (whose major servant is Ariel), defeats the 'dark powers' of 'the damned witch Sycorax' in a redemptive triumph over an earth-bound nativism. In this view of Shakespeare, *The Tempest* can be read as a cultural myth of a humanist society: an appropriation of

the mythic, folkloric, oral imagination recoded by the humanist imagination and an expanding culture of writing.

Behind the discourse of English country-house civility and Bagenal plantation lies the history of the rise of humanism and the development and expansion of print technologies and its products, noteworthy events in the growth of the structures of writing which inform the Elizabethan inscription of Ireland in a colonial cultural discourse. Friel's scrutiny of language, text, discourse and writing illustrates a post-colonial scepticism about the grand narrative of progress which the 'civilised/imperial' cultures have constructed on behalf of themselves. Central to this narrative is the humanist celebration of culture, beginning in England with Shakespeare and Spenser and moving forward to the contemporary institutionalised distribution of literacy, writing and text. Friel's work defamiliarises the humanist ideologies of writing as a site of creativity, morality, autonomy and liberation, exposing it as a mythological knowledge by divulging how it has been instrumental in appropriating, displacing and imprisoning the colonised culture. As G. H. Bantock's remark 'Nothing comes over more clearly in the Renaissance than the fact that culture is a weapon -...a means of triumphing over rivals'.[27]

The Dramatist as Deconstructionist

Hugh's wife, Mabel Bagenal takes on a powerful religious and racial symbolism. Her marriage to O'Neill is the play's symbol of cultural integration between England and Ireland. The herbs that Mary gives to her sister refer to the liaison. She warns 'don't plant the fennel near the dill or the two will cross-fertilise...You'll end up with a seed that's neither one thing or the other'. Mabel's death in the wake of the defeat of the Gaelic culture at Kinsale - and the antagonism between the two cultures it speaks of, is additionally a death of the possibility of cultural integration. The death of Mabel and the child is attributed to 'poisoning of

the blood', signifying cultural and racial pollution - two civilisations at odds with each other, racially and culturally.

The drama's discursive dialectic between emergent English humanist forms of colonial discourse and Romanish Catholic forms of nationalist discourse is contingent upon the failure of the Gaelic civilisation to successfully defend and renew itself. *Making History* dramatises the defeat at Kinsale by an English Elizabethan militia as a systematic ruination of the Gaelic people and their way of life. Hugh O'Donnell reports the scale of destruction to O'Neill as a human and cultural genocide:

> ...it's a complete collapse...the countryside is in chaos...slaughter, famine, disease. Mountjoy's riding up and down the country and beheading everything that stirs.

The demise of Gaelic society and the subsequent attempt to incorporate the Irish subject into colonial and nationalist discourses is historically contextualised by Eagleton as a process of Gaelic hegemonic collapse:

> Towards the end of the twelfth century in Ireland there arose a cultural apparatus based upon the hereditary custody of native learning and literature by certain families within the hegemonic class - an apparatus which is shattered by the English subjugation of Ireland in the seventeenth century.[28]

Archbishop Lombard refers directly to the demise of the Gaelic hegemony,'six hundred and thirty years of O'Neill hegemony', and to Gaelic lamentation for O'Neill's defeat. R. F. Foster notes that in 1601, Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, broke into pieces the pre-Christian stone at Tullyhogue upon which the O'Neills of a Gaelic Ulster were traditionally inaugurated.[29] This destruction of the symbolic political centre of Gaelic civilisation, the defeat of O'Neill at Kinsale and his subsequent departure to Rome, marks a watershed in Irish history - the loss of Gaelic power and the rise in Ireland, politically, of an English Protestant hegemony, religiously, of a Roman Catholic hegemony, both of which mobilise text, discourse and representation as a means of ideological incorporation and interpellation.

Gaelic hegemony has been broken by English military invasion of Ireland and Archbishop Lombard moves to construct a Catholic counter-hegemony to combat English political, religious and cultural domination of the Irish by inscribing them in an alternative historical discourse. Summoning up a new Irish nationalism, he proclaims, 'we are no longer a casual group of tribes but a nation state united under the papal colours'. The making of history through writing is the governing thematic dialogue within the drama and as an agent of Friel's deconstructive strategy, Archbishop Lombard, the Irish Catholic cleric established within a Catholic hegemony of literacy and learning, is installed as the mouthpiece of a contemporary deconstructive discourse. Hugh O'Neill advances the case for an essentialist version of history rendered in a discourse that proposes truth and totality: 'I need the truth, Peter...Record the *whole* life...tell the whole truth'. For Lombard there is no single, transcendent truth in history waiting to be formulated or unearthed: 'I don't believe that a period of history contains within it one "true" interpretation just waiting to be mined'. This archaeological image of the idea of a golden vein of "truth" in the historical waiting to be excavated imagistically connotes *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in which Foucault recognises that history is neither monument nor document but a dynamic construct of discourses insidiously or consciously designed to produce specific knowledges of the past. As far back as *Volunteers*, Friel has recognised the plurality of history, recognising in that play the 'official' version of history which represents itself as true works to exclude undermining versions of the past.

Opposing empirical and essentialist concepts of the past with the concept of history as imaginative discourse, Hugh's assertion is indicative of Friel's concern about the problematic nature of historical knowledge. Throughout the play, Lombard questions the truth value of historical writing: 'Are truth and falsity the proper criteria? Maybe when the time comes my first responsibility would be to tell the best possible narrative'. Archbishop Lombard argues for the fictive nature of

history - that it is a discourse which embodies the past in a meaning-making language. Lombard polemically develops a pluralist view of historiography which recognises that history and fiction are associated discourses:

> People think they just want to know the 'facts', they think they believe in some sort of empirical truth, but what they really have is a story. And that's what this will be: the events of your life categorised and classified and then structured as you would structure a story...a narrative that people will read and be satisfied by.

It is historiography's emplotments of past events, a process of selection, interpretation and articulation, which constructs the illusion of what are conceived to be historical facts. The meaning and shape of history is not to be apprehended through fact and event but through the narrative system which makes sense of the past and rhetorically transforms event into fact.

History then is being proposed as plural and fictive, a discourse governed by the rules of narrative and the representational medium of language. Inquiring into the linguistic relations between history and language, George Steiner asks: 'What material reality has history outside of language?'. His response is to recognise the encoding of the culturally inherited past in language: *'We remember culturally as* we do individually, by conventions of emphasis, foreshortening, omission'.[30] This knowledge of linguistic inscription and fictive construction is the knowledge which Friel has dissolved into the discourse of *Making History*. These ideas mean that Friel's post-colonial idiom converges with the poststructuralist premise that historical and cultural discourse are fictive and subject to prior textualisation accessible to linguistic scrutiny. This is the polemic and the method of Archbishop Lombard as he constructs a narrative of Irish nationalism during the course of the drama.

The Making of Catholic Nationalist History

The question that becomes central, polemically speaking, is what factors motivate and influence the choice of narrative and discursive modes. In a

Foucauldian mode, Lombard enunciates the intrinsic relationship between the writer of history, the position from which he writes and the people about and for whom it is written:

> ...the life of Hugh O'Neil can be told in many different ways. And those ways are determined by the needs and demands and expectations of different people and different eras...I'm not altogether my own man, Hugh. To an extent I simply fulfil the needs, satisfy the expectations.

This view of the historian is analogous to that of the Gramscian intellectual described in *Selection From Prison Notebooks*: 'One cannot make politics-history without the sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation'.[31] This refers to Gramsci's processes of cultural hegemony, the link between the dominant power and the popular consciousness within the realm of culture. Archbishop Lombard's role as Counter-Reformation clergy and historian is asserted in terms of his relation to the needs of a defeated peasantry.

The defeat of Gaelic Ireland and the colonial subjugation of the Irish people demands a history that can raise self-esteem, develop strong senses of unity and identity and cultivate inspiration and aspiration. Lombard's intent is to fulfil this criteria by recounting a history of O'Neill's life which is best characterised by his response to Hugh's depressive sense of defeat: 'You lost a battle - that has to be said. But the telling of it can still be a triumph'. He thereby offers Ireland 'a mythic self-image incorporated in a heroic language that inflates its glories and suppresses its faults', a refined definition of Friel's concept of history as *images of the past embodied in language*. This mythopoeic vocation is fully elaborated by an insistent and committed Lombard:

> Think of this [book] as an act of *pietas*. Ireland is reduced as it has never been reduced before - we are talking about a colonised people on the brink of extinction...Now is the time for a hero. Now is the time for a heroic literature. So I am offering a Gaelic Ireland two things. I'm offering them this narrative that has the elements of myth. And I'm offering them Hugh O'Neill as a national hero. A hero and the study of a hero.

Lombard's history begins with a ritual recitation of the aristocratic hero's Gaelic genealogy, Gaelic fostering and tutelage, and climaxes in a formulaic attribution to the hero of a series of idealising epithets and a declaration of his heroic destiny:

> In the name of God, herewith I set my hand to chronicle the life of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, son of Feardordnan, son of Conn Bacagh, son of Conn Mor, noblest son of noble lineage who was fostered and brought up by the high-born nobles of his tribe, the O'Hagans and O'Quinns, and who continued to grow and increase in comeliness and urbanity, tact and eloquence, wisdom and knowledge, goodly size and noble deeds, so that his name and fame spread throughout the five provinces of Ireland and beyond...And people reflected in their minds that when he would reach manhood there would not be one like him to avenge the wrongs and punish the plunderings of his race.

Lombard's narrative through a ritual form of literary discourse places O'Neill within a category of mythic Gaelic hero of which the most notable are Cuchulain and Finn MacCool. Essential to the aggrandising process is the underpinning Catholic sub-text. Not only is the narrative situated within a Catholic universe, 'In the name of God', but also it employs the Christian myth of salvation as well as the Celtic myth of regeneration to underscore the heroic destiny of O'Neill, calling up the Old Testament 'prophets' and the apocalyptic rhetoric of the second-coming, 'For it was foretold by prophets and by predictions of futurity that there would come one like him...a god-like prince'. The Irish people are offered inspiration and aspiration through mythic narrative patterns of recurrence and resurrection.

Archetypal patterns and idiom of hyperbole of epic narrative constitute a style of historical text which services a particular Catholic nationalist ideological and discursive strategy, as Hayden Whyte relates in *Metahistory*:

> A historical text may emerge as romance, tragedy, comedy or satire...Each such controlling form exhibits an affinity for a particular mode of ideological implication...a histographical style.[32]

In recounting his narrative, Lombard utilises the stylistic character and archetypal patterns of the major epic narrative forms in Irish culture: the archaic literary form of the Irish-Gaelic epic and the Catholic-Christian literary epic, the Bible. Lombard is writing in the margins of cultural texts which precede his own to create what would be seen in retrospect as a nationalist narrative.

The narrative plot that he structures hinges upon three key events: O'Neill's investiture at the crowning stone of Tullyhogue, The Nine Years War and Battle of Kinsale, and The Flight of the Earls. The final event is exemplary of the emotional evocation of an heroic tragedy and the way in which language not only presents history but represents it by encoding it in sentiment and value:

> And then I come to my third and final key point; and I'm calling this section - I'm rather proud of the title - I've named it 'The Flight of the Earls'. That has a ring to it...That tragic but magnificent exit of the Gaelic aristocracy.

Lombard's narrative constitutes a deliberate suppression of the fragmentations and humiliations apparent in the history of Gaelic society and in O'Neill's life, internecine tribal warfare, political machination and military humiliation, in the interests of national self-esteem and unity and to meet the criteria of a romantic Catholic morality. He also expunges from historical record Hugh's assimilation into English cultural and political society: O'Neill's English childhood, the titular awards of Queen Elizabeth, the military and political alliance with various English colonisers. The mythic self-image is bolstered by a Catholic morality which excludes Hugh's own self-portrait of himself as a schemer, liar, lecher and drunk, and excludes an account of his four wives on the basis they are a *'surfeit'. In this* fashion, Friel brings to awareness the discursive field which constitutes history as a site of national unity and heterogeneity and wards off the excess of appetite, desire and frailty.

The characters of Mabel and O'Neill display a linguistic self-consciousness which recognises the linguistic protocols which determine the structure and meaning of what is written. Of Lombard's discourse she comments 'I always have the feeling that when he's talking about you and about Ireland, he's really talking in code about Rome and Roman power'. Friel is thus writing a history play which witnesses the conditions of the emergence and existence of Irish Catholic nationalist discourse, a knowledge being produced by the ideology and institution of a Europeanised Roman Catholic clergy which can interpellate a people into a mode of

Catholicised Irish resistance. The play dramatises the discourse being constructed, its selections and omissions being made, its sentiment and value being encoded in a specific linguistic style, the position in history that the discourse assumes.

Historical Revisionism

With the awareness that history cannot be understood outside of its ideological and discursive parameters, the life of Hugh O'Neill, around which the play is temporally and thematically structured, converts from a site of *construction* of historical narrative to a site of *deconstruction* of historical narrative. Through its didactic mode, the play transfers the issues of historiography from the realm of history *per se* to the realm of historical representation: who writes, from what position, on whose account and for what intent. The resistance by Hugh O'Neill to English monarchy and Tudor administration and his defeat by these forces is transferred from the ground of stabilised traditional teleology, of the heroic and tragic loss of Gaeldom, to the unstable ground of deconstruction which disrupts the polar oppositions between England-Ireland and tarnishes the polished image of O'Neill and the idealised plot of history.

In showing the English and Roman Catholic makings of history, the dramatist's hand is constructing an alternative fiction determined by his own historical era, its structures of feeling, its system of thought. Disconcertingly for nationalist images of O'Neill, he is attributed military collusion with the colonists, 'I've trotted behind the Tudor on several expeditions against the native rebels', and makes a marriage with the Protestant Mabel Bagenal, daughter of a Staffordshire planter. Rather than Gaelic hero, he is depicted as culturally ambiguous. Hugh speaks in 'an upper-English accent', he is dressed in English fashion and reminisces fondly on his childhood and adolescence amongst the English establishment who granted him his title as Earl of Tyrone. From this problematised identity, O'Neill acts as the teller of a more tawdry tale of Gaelic defeat presenting a more

ignominious version of Lombard's three glorified key events: the Coronation was 'a political ploy'; Kinsale an inglorious defeat, 'They routed us in less than an hour....We ran like rats'; and his departure from Ireland a humiliating affair, 'As we pulled out from Rathmullen, the McSweeney's stoned us from the shore...we ran away'. Hugh's ultimate fate is not as heroic exile, but as a 'soured, bitter emigre', diminished to the status of impoverished lecher and drunk.

Irish-English relations are also given a broader European context prepared for in the expanding geographical and cultural mappings of *Translations* and *The Communication Cord*. Friel situates England and Ireland within the sixteenth-century European contentions between the Reformational forces of Protestantism and secularisation and the Counter-Reformational forces of Catholicism and Christendom. Hugh is a man who finds himself briefly at the centre of European history - with conflicting allegiances to Gaeldom, England and Christendom. Although witting of these forces at work in his life, what he terms 'the sure slow tide of history', he cannot grasp nor influence fully the 'overall thing'; 'we don't even begin to know what it means', comments Hugh, who ultimately proves to be a hostage to European fortune - precipitated into action by the manoeuvres of Counter-Reformation Spain, to fight at Kinsale, neither a place nor time of his choosing.

In 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', Foucault claims that the 'good historian' is one who 'understands the reality of the decentred subject to exist in the play of masking and unmasking'.[33] Friel's demythologising of one of the central myths of nationalist culture situates him in the contemporary process of historical revisionism through exploring the historical formation of the discourses of colonialism and nationalism and the way in which they sought to constitute the colonised subject, a theatrical form of unmasking . Revisionism, however, has come under attack from traditionalist nationalist historians who have tended to use the term 'revisionist' in a pejorative and accusatory way. Desmond Fennell argues that the revision of

nationalist history marks a major departure from nationalist ideology on which the Irish state was founded, and colludes with the Republic's political establishment who have constituted a consensus with the British establishment against nationalist aspirations within the island of Ireland. Claims Fennell, revisionism is 'the historiography of the Irish counter-revolution',[34] though not necessarily because of the rewriting of history but because of its lack of value as a galvanising agency or imagery of nationhood.

Ronan Fanning in 'The Meaning of Revisionism' takes the view that revisionism involves the necessary repudiation of legend and myth which served as history during the political and cultural struggle for nationhood which reached its apotheosis in the epoch 1916-21.[35] Post-colonial history, he proposes, needs to counter the certainties and simplicities of nationalist mythology which condition the traditional Irish cast of mind, a situation exacerbated by the Northern crisis. This is essentially the position which F. S. Lyons outlines in a radio lecture of 1971:

> In the present situation...the thesis of revolution, the theories of nationality, the theories of history, which have brought Ireland to its present pass, cry out for reexamination, and the time is ripe to break with the great enchantment which for too long has made myth so much more congenial than reality.[36]

This is the condition which Friel addresses in plays such as *Volunteers* and *The Communication Cord* - where he tests out the usefulness of an Irish Ireland mythology to contemporary Irish society.

Hugh O'Neill voices the 'revisionist' riposte to Lombard's nationalist text of history in which 'You are going to embalm me in a florid lie'. Lombard's ostentatious and highly-coloured fiction of O'Neill's defeat is about to endue Irish consciousness with the enchanting fragrance of an historical myth which conditions and underpins the violent ideologies of nationhood. Friel wants to disembalm the corpse of history and construct other versions of the past registering that 'during the present period of unrest I can foresee that the two allegiances that have bound the Irish imagination - loyalty to the church in the world and devotion to a romantic

ideal...will be altered...new definitions will be forged'.[37] This is essentially the revisionist business of *Making History* and Field Day, to bring into question the romanticised perceptions and fantasies which are part of people's mythic self and national identity, and to participate in the historical recreation of other senses of identity for Irish people which is 'free of the influence of London, Britain and England but also free of the myths that come from the nationalist tradition of the south'.[38]

Friel's text is revisionist in its rewriting of the coloniser's discourse through an ironic linguistic and dramatic discourse - it is a counter-knowledge being produced by the post-colonialist writer who has become empowered by the medium of drama and text inherited from the Renaissance epoch of which he writes. In this respect *Making History* is an exemplary case of Field Day's cultural project. The deconstruction of English colonial, Ulster planter and Catholic nationalist discourses fits well the criteria of contributing to the solution of the present crisis in Ulster by analysing 'established opinions, myths and stereotypes'.[39]

Shaun Richards, however, in his article 'Field Day's Fifth Province: Avenue or Impasse?' is less impressed by the impartiality of Field Day and Friel's associated dramas. Citing Edna Longley's criticism that a good deal of Field Day's output, pamphlets and drama, is 'largely a matter of old whines in new bottles'[40] and John Wilson Foster's criticism that for Field Day 'Unity is all right, unionism is all wrong',[41] Richards registers Field Day's reluctance to stage Frank McGuiness's *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* and David Rudkin's *The Saxon Shore*. Richards implies that these dramas which deal with Unionism and Saxonism from inside and evoke Unionist and English myths of self-hood and sovereignty are sympathetic to a settler's predicament which run counter to nationalist and neutralist positions upon the island of Ireland. These are the factors to be weighed in considering the broader output of Field Day.

1. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p.171.
2. W. J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, p.82.
3. Seamus Deane, *A Short History of Irish Literature*, p.11.
4. Proinsias MacCana, *Literature in Irish*, p.12.
5. P. J. Dowling, *A History of Irish Education: A Study in Conflicting Loyalties*, p.24.
6. Seamus Heaney, 'The God in the Tree', in *Preoccupations*, 181-89 (p.183).
7. George Steiner, *After Babel*, p.29.
8. Michel Foucault, 'Questions on Geography', in *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge; Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, pp.63-77 (p.69).
9. Max Weber, *The Spirit of Capitalism and the Protestant Work-Ethic*. p.43.
10. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.5.
11. Declan Kiberd, 'Anglo-Irish Attitudes', in *Ireland's Field Day*, pp.81-105 (p.83).
12. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p.178.
13. R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*, pp.7-8.
14. Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, p.205.
15. Edmund Spenser, pp.62-63 (Cairns and Richards, p.5).
16. Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare*, p.91.
17. Abdul R. Jan Mohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', in *"Race", Writing and Difference*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jnr, pp.78-106 (p.80).
18. Tony Crowley, *The Politics of Discourse*, p.216.
19. Marie Louise Pratt, 'The Face of the Country, or, What Mr Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen', in *"Race", Writing and Difference*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jnr, pp.138-62 (p.139).
20. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.25.
21. Margaret Mac Curtain, *Tudor and Stuart Ireland*, p.83.
22. Margaret Mac Curtain, p.70.
23. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, p.20.
24. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.41.
25. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.38.

26. G. H. Bantock, *Studies in the History of Education Theory, Vol I: Artifice and Nature*, p.226.

27. G. H. Bantock, *Education, Culture and the Emotional*, p.46.

28. *Criticism and Ideology*, p.55.

29. R. F. Foster, pp.4-5.

30. George Steiner, p.29.

31. Antonio Gramsci, *Selection From Prison Notebooks*, p.418.

32. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, p.38.

33. Michel Foucault, in *Literature and History*, ed by Leonard Schulze and Waltar Wetzels, p.32.

34. Desmond Fennell, 'Against Revisionism', *Irish Review*, 4 (1988), 20-26 (p.23).

35. Ronan Fanning, 'The Making of Revisionism', *Irish Review*, 4 (1988), 15-19.

36. F. S. Lyons, 'The Great Enchantment', *Radio Lecture*, 1971 (Desmond Fennell, pp.21-2).

37. Brian Friel, 'Plays Peasant and Unpeasant', *Times Lit*erary *Supplement*, 17 March 1972 , 305-6 (p.306).

38. Brian Friel, p.306.

39. Field Day Theatre Company, 'Preface', in *Ireland's Field Day*, vii.

40. Edna Longley, 'More Martyrs to Abstraction', *Fortnight*, July/August 1984, p.20. (Shaun Richards, 'Field Day's Fifth Province: Avenue or Impasse?', in *Culture and Politics in Northern Ireland: 1960-1990*, edited by Eamonn Hughes, 139-50 (p.144).

41. John Wilson Foster, 'The Critical Condition of Ulster', *Honest Ulsterman*, 79 (1985), 38-55 (p.43). (Shaun Richards, p.144).

CHAPTER 4: REMEMBERING IRELAND

Translations (1980), *The Communication Cord* and *Making History* (1988) are plays which have a polemic and theory of language working through them which allow them to be classified as sophisticated, postmodernist plays. The temporally adjacent plays, *Faith Healer* (1979) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), are dramas which epistemologically occupy a different literary and cultural space. Although language theory continues as an issue and a presence in these dramas they also seek to locate themselves in the imaginary, non-discursive space of a folkloric, pagan culture. Interestingly, neither of these dramas is produced under the aegis of Field Day. They currently bracket off Friel's dramatic productions through the Company and it may be that the paganistic, folkloric ethos is less conducive to the cultural project of Field Day than the more theoretically sophisticated language plays of the 1980s.

Both *Faith Healer* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*, dramatise the nature of the post-colonial scepticism about the grand narratives of progress which the humanist ideologies of a textualised, literate culture proclaim on their own behalf. *Making History* dramatises that form of society and ideology in the making in Elizabethan England and in a planted Ireland. To return to *The Tempest* as an exemplary text of the literary cultural formation taking place in England at the outset of Irish colonisation, the Indian female critic, Anna Loomba, in her post-colonial essay 'Seizing the Books', posits the drama as a Shakespearian text which exhibits in its own symbolic narrative a celebration of the humanist imagination which is reworking the mythic, folkloric, oral tradition within an individualist, humanist ethic. A benign imperialist Protestant humanism dressed up in the guise of Prospero is portrayed as a redemptive ethic capable of saving the primitive native

represented by Sycorax/Caliban from its pre-Christian darkness and depravity. This is the reading which Anna Loomba attaches to the relations between the dark magical powers attributed to the witch, Sycorax, and the magical humanist powers of the magician, Prospero:

> Sycorax has been read as Prospero's 'other' through repeated contrasts in the drama between their different magics and their respective reigns of the island and used by him to claim a superior morality, a greater strength and a greater humanity, and hence explain his takeover of the island to its inhabitants.[1]

In this post-colonialist view of Shakespeare *The Tempest* is being re-read as a cultural myth of a humanist society in which:

> ...the great archetypal themes of a communal poetry become elaborated, personalised, projected into an individually chosen set of symbols. The social myths are replaced by a number of more individualised thematic treatments which increasingly are concerned with unique response to the archetypal situation.[2]

This is the condition which Friel continues to critique: a culture of literacy which favours a materialist, individualistic ethic over that of an oral, communal, pagan tradition of culture displacing and earasing older ways of knowing and relating to place and community.

As Alan Baddeley comments 'In non-literate societies, tradition is crucially dependent on memory, and hence devices, to preserve and communicate traditions assume vital importance'.[3] In the cultural matrix of Heaney and Friel's society is a deeply embedded tradition of artistic remembering to which they are heirs. In Gaelic culture the role of the guardian of traditional knowledge belonged to the *fili*, a poet and scholar. Heaney's poetry is almost entirely constituted by rites of memory, the act of poetry is the act of remembering: his own childhood, ancestry, the dead, events of history, deposits in culture, language and texts. 'Don't you remember?' is a frequent refrain in Brian Friel's drama, a question which opens to view the centrality of memory as an agency in Friel's work. Richard Pine reports upon Friel's remark that 'Ritual is part of all drama. Drama without ritual is poetry without rhythm - hence not poetry, not drama...Drama is a RITE, and always

religious in the purest sense'.[4] His theatre is essentially constituted by rituals of remembrance of a personal and historical past. The dramas in question here take memory as their very subject, they manifest in a fulsome form how memory is related to modernity conceived as an economic, social and cultural formation in which the materialistic life, the interventions of science, technology, transport, industry and education, depletes traditional ways of living and knowing self, community and place.

Faith Healer: Trimming the Celtic Fringe

Seamus Heaney describes the diviner as possessing 'a gift for being in touch with what's there, a gift for mediating between the latent resource and the community that wants it current and released'.[5] Heaney in his projected roles as diviner ('The Diviner, *DN*), thatcher with the 'Midas touch' ('Thatcher', *DD*) and blacksmith beating out rhythms on the anvil 'Horned as a unicorn' ('The Forge, *DD*) cuts a magical figure whose 'skills are mysterious even occult', an inheritor of powers of a deep cultural hinterland out of which the poet and the dramatist, Brian Friel, have historically emerged.[6] In Friel's short story 'Among the Ruins', the protagonist Joe's efforts to regain the 'feel of the place' in which he was born involve an unconscious divining rite:

> He walked slowly up the path to the remains of the house and walked round three times. He tried to move without making any sound, so that the stillness in his mind would not be disturbed. He knew he was waiting for something. But nothing came from the past - no voice, no cry, no laugh, not even the bark of a dog. He was suddenly angry. He charged down the garden through the hedge.

Brian Friel remembers this period of his life when he was teaching and writing short stories which suggests that Joe is a projection of the writer's own persona: 'as Seamus Heaney puts it...there are only certain stretches of ground over which the writer's divining rod will come to life'.[7] In Friel's plays of Ballybeg and drama of the translation of place-names in *Translations* and in Heaney's place-name poems of

Wintering Out, dramatist and poet invoke place-name to make alliances between art and communal memory, this is Frank's putative operation in *Faith Healer.*

In the drama it is Frank's diminished powers of faith-healing which represent a folk, pagan tradition which has been broken down by the disintegrations of a Celtic society which is given as coherent in terms of its pre-Christian and Gaelic forms of culture. Frank's *modus operandi* is the recitation of a litany of Celtic place-names which seeks to tap the sacral energies in language and place:

> Frank: (*Eyes closed*)
>
> > All those dying Welsh villages...I'd recite the names to myself just for the mesmerism, the sedation, of the incantation'.
> >
> > Kinlochbervie, Inverbervie,
> > Inverdruie, Invergordon,
> > Badachroo, Kinlochewe,
> > Ballantrae, Inverkeithing,
> > Cawdor, Kirkonnel,
> > Plaidy, Kirkinner...

Frank becomes an agent and conduit for the release of parochial pagan energies into and amongst the community. Frank's healing, acknowledges Kearney, 'is dependent upon a ritual of communion', it 'can only work when healer and healed come together in a ritual of magic communion'[8] mediated through the energies of a Celtic sense of place.

In the modern world, however, it is a chance operation because of the kind of linguistic and geographical erosions Friel configures in *Translations*. The Welsh and Scottish theatres of the Celtic fringe where Frank, the faith-healer, performs in *Faith Healer* belong to a receding heritage, 'The kirks and meeting-houses or schools-all identical, all derelict'. The audiences are described by Frank as 'Abject, Abased, Tight. Longing to open themselves and at the same time fearfully herding the anguish they contained against psychic disturbance'. The centres of community have been scoured of feeling and collectivity by desensualising ideologies from outside of the Celtic landscape: Calvinism, Methodism, Humanism and Capitalism. Friel is witting here of the anxious ascetic conversion of Celtic landscapes of culture

in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland from the late sixteenth century onwards by pietist Protestant movements which Max Weber discusses in *The Spirit of Capitalism and the Protestant Work-Ethic*. Weber describes the colonisation of traditional cultures by the ascetic religious and material forces of modernity as a process of "*Entzauberung das Welt*", literally the unmagicking that the world has been undergoing in the modern period.[9] *Faith Healer* paints a vivid imagistic and verbal picture of how Celtic pagan ritual has been debased, its energies and rites no longer accessible to the consciousness of a demoralised people:

> Maybe in a corner a withered sheaf of wheat from a harvest thanksgiving of years ago or a fragment of a Christmas decoration across a window - relics of abandoned ritual. Because the people we moved among were beyond that kind of celebration.

The language records decay, a discontinued Celtic way of life reminiscent of Heaney's imagery of a fading cultural heritage in 'Traditions'(*WO*): 'like the coccyx/ or a Brigid's Cross/ yellowing in some outhouse'.

The 'disintegrating Celtic landscape has entered the mind of the protagonist'[10] in the play so that collective remembering and psychic union is problematised. Frank Hardy's performances are in cultural spaces in which an evocative, magical past can only be residual refracted through the non-pagan language and cultural overlay of Celtic ground. Through the trace of Celticism still inherent in the anglicised and materialised place-names of that culture, Frank attempts to accrete former presences, to gather up what has been consigned by a secular age and a puritan Protestantism to the realm of forgetfulness, the realm of the cultural unconscious. Only in the summoning of the spirit of place against the suppressions contained within the 'Old Methodist Hall' in the village of Llanbethian in Wales is Frank transiently successful.

Ireland is still canvassed, however, as a place where faith and ritual still repose. Grace speaks of Frank's hope that 'Ireland might somehow recharge him,

maybe even restore him'. In Frank's first rendition and interpretation of his home-coming he imagines a thorough-going Irish festive occasion:

> Toasts to my return. To Donal's finger. Toasts to the departed groom and his prowess. To the bride and her fertility. To the rich harvest - the corn, the wheat, the barley. Toasts to all Septembers and to all harvests and to all things ripe and eager for the reaper. A Dionysian night. A Bacchanalian night. A frenzied excessive Irish night when ritual was consciously and relentlessly debauched.

Frank's homecoming, dated the last day of August, the eve of the autumn harvest, is a harbinger of a fuller exploration of the decay of festive life in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. These carnival imaginings have to give way to a more sober reality, his thoughts are 'a charade', the truer response 'There was no sense of a home-coming - I tried to stimulate it but nothing stirred. Only a few memories, wan and neutral'. Communal memory and collective feeling have been broken down here, too, Frank is unable to divine the spirit of place. In a modern environment, the faith-healer has become estranged from the environment, he is no longer able to dispense the cathartic festive spirit amongst the assembled crowd.

McGarvey is the chief symbol of that breakdown. He has been in his own life a carouser 'who had danced, drunk, built roads, cut turf' and should have been best man at the wedding, a playboy and community arbiter of local fertility rites. But instead he is absent, because he is paralysed, bound to a wheelchair, an image of the crippled parochial Celtic heritage. McGarvey is like Hugh O'Donnell and Columba, figures of a sensual, active nature which has had to give way to ascetic forms of Catholic and English ways of living or symbolically akin to the lame Manus in *Translations*, the crippled mother in *Living Quarters* and the senile father in *Aristocrats* who emblematise the degeneracy as well as the atrophy of particular and current social groups in the historical culture.

It is the figure of McGarvey whom Frank sets himself the challenge of healing, though his premonition is that it will lead to his own sacrificial murder - a realisation, perhaps, that such a feat would be against the currents of a desacralising

history. Frank sets the scene in ritualistic terms. On a September morning just after dawn the local male fraternity unite in ritual intent, we 'existed only in the need we had for each other'. Frank offers himself ambiguously as ritual healer or ritual victim, his inability to heal McGarvey leads to his death, a moment for Frank Hardy of 'a genuine sense of home-coming'. Deane interprets the closing scene of faith healing and savage ritual sacrifice as indicative of the deformed spirit of rural Ireland. His gift has been diluted and people's lives degraded, so they re-convene and commune around a perverse rather than a creative ritualism, the 'men's savage violence' and 'his miraculous gift' are 'obverse versions' of one another. Says Deane, Hardy dies back into the place out of which his healing came in the first place.[11]

Unsaved Grace

Grace's shift between life with Frank in the Celtic fringes, life at home with her father, a North of Ireland Judge whose obsession with order drives his wife to suicide, and later her experience of the London metropolis, exhibits the dialectic between modern and traditional structures of feeling in the Celtic peoples of Britain and Ireland. Grace's father is a generationally earlier refraction of the imperialistically archaic and corrupt authority systems of the Irish North which *The Freedom of the City* depicts. In *Aristocrats*, the Father is also a retired Judge grown senile, personifying the decayed social authority and standing of the Catholic ascendancy. The incumbent patriarchal authorities in the Ireland of the twentieth-century have tended to lose their historical role or their legitimacy to govern and rule. Grace herself is a lapsed solicitor, her tendency is to place her faith in the impoverished itinerant life which Frank leads rather than the orderly life of the professional classes from which she hails.

Grace's relation with Frank is turbulent, they quarrel frequently like two spirits in contention rather than communion. Mutuality only takes place during the

festive carousing they enjoy for four days and nights after Frank's miracle of healing in Llanbethian. Frank and Grace share not only the experience of their personal affair but also are psychically and experientially constellated by the locales of small Welsh and Scottish villages which she names as the 'most persistent and most agonising' of all her memories. Grace acts as a form of *saving grace*, her faith in Frank upholds his faith. She recounts how Frank used to question and test her belief in him: 'probing my affirmations for the hair crack, tuned for the least hint of excess or uncertainty ...drawing sustenance from me'. In this role, Grace emblematises a form of feminine energy upon which Frank draws - a signifier of divine inspiration, regeneration and strengthening influence - until, she says, 'finally he drained me, finally I was exhausted'. This is the demise of the tradition, of a spirit of place and culture so cut off from its origins that it can no longer sustain and nourish its people.

After Frank's death Grace is reconstructed back into her former condition of humanist rationalism: living in London, visiting the library for four hours each day, listening to the radio, reading, relying on rationalist forms of healing. Frank's Other, a composed male professional doctor wearing grey suit and college tie, treats Grace with the rationalist advice of behaviourism: 'bring the same mental vigour, the same discipline to your recovery that you once brought to a legal case', and with the tranquilisers of a chemical medicine, whereas Frank offered incantation and psychic communion. Significantly, the doctor is in possession of a 'golden pen' with which he writes down Frank's occupation as artist - a chirographic humanist professional rather than an oral, pagan, faith-healer. The reconstruction of Frank's role within a humanist version of culture demoralises the suffering Grace who is also translated back out of Frank's Celtic domain by the weighty rationalism of an English print culture: 'And because I said it [Frank's occupation] and this doctor wrote it down it must be true'.

But the medicine and rationales of a modern humanism are unable to mediate Grace's psychic needs. The effect of the rationalisation is to reproduce her sense of strangeness in the world. Suppressed memories keep re-emerging into consciousness and she is bereft of the world-view or meaning system which can permit and discharge such Celtic imaginings: 'I'm one of his fictions...I need him to sustain me in my existence'. Frank represents the imaginative vision of a reduced and submerged Celtic world-view, offering Grace the possibility of knowing herself in terms of a world of instinct, intuition, marvel and miracle which he can access and mediate. It is in this sense Frank is a potential redemptive force if his shamanistic, hieratic capacities could only survive the modernisation process. Grace is finally undone by the tensions and confusion generated by the suppression of her Celtic way of life by a rationalist culture, her personality disintegrates, becomes depressive and she finally commits suicide.

The Cockney Centre

Teddy does not immediately share the same community of origin or feeling as Frank and Grace around Celtic place-name; he does not share in the recitation of the place-names and at first his memory of the name of Kinlochbervie is uncertain. Although a fairly phlegmatic character he is at times baffled and bemused by the Celtic temperament. Teddy, in fact, represents in the play a consciousness which belongs to the 'popular' culture of England rather than an educated culture. He expresses admiration for a number of cult heroes: Fred Astaire, Lily Langtry, Houdini, Sir Laurence Olivier, Charlie Chaplin, Gracie Fields, whom he praises as 'great artistes'. His contribution to Frank Hardy's performance is the provision of Fred Astaire's popular song 'The Way You Look Tonight'.

Raymond Williams speaks of the difference in cultural conditions between peasant communities and courts where the terms that matter are 'folk' and 'polite' (or 'aristocratic') and a modern class society in which the relevant terms are

'popular' and 'educated'.[12] In charting the evolution of culture in England, Williams sees a metamorphosis from a rural, peasant culture constructed out of a feudal relationship to an urban, popular culture constructed out of a capitalist society. In the circumstances of Ireland which Friel is addressing, folk culture has not so much changed as has been penetrated by a 'popular' culture imported from England and America, new deposits in the Celtic psyche which tend to continue the process of cultural degradation and displacement witnessed historically in other of Friel's dramas. Teddy is the assistant director of Frank's 'show' who has previously made his living out of managing music-hall acts such as 'The Piping Dog' and 'Miss Mulattoe and Her Pigeons' which are exhibited by Friel as perverse forms of a degraded folk culture.

Teddy is by no means an insensitive or unfeeling character, but he is endowed with an English pragmatism which is distinctly different from the Irish sensibility Friel portrays in this and other plays. Teddy divulges that he is not 'a praying man' and offers the pragmatism of a populist secularism which lacks a consciousness of history: 'you've got to be a realist...live in the present'. As a small-time entrepreneur, describing himself as being in the '*promotions business*', he is a necessary and effective technician and organiser 'vital to Frank's performance', which converts Frank into 'a hybrid creature devoted to the infirm and the commercialism of a meretricious mountebank'.[13] He possesses a distinct work-ethic, guided by rules and principles which distinguish between work and leisure, emotions and action: 'friends is friends..work is work'. He incantates the ethics of a capitalism which claim his mental landscape. He 'has his job to do...You have your job to do' is the means by which he accounts for his and Frank's relationship and role. It is Teddy's values and practices which shape the Celtic activities on the fringes of Britain illustrating the insidious process of suppression of Celtic culture and historic ways of life.

It is tempting to read Teddy in his cultural relations with Frank and Grace, a benign, paternal figure who has to tolerate all the emotional play and violence of his two wards, who is able to watch and help them in their hour of need but, ultimately, he is structured in dominance by the imperialist and popular cultural relationship England has in relation to Ireland and its folk culture. He is the supervisor and manager of Frank's faith-healing enterprise, he is at home in London, where the displaced Grace dies, far from the Ireland where the culturally ruined Frank finds his violent death. But instead of his experience of Celtic otherness becoming an occasion in which he might experience the strangeness of his own English, Cockney, working-class masculinity, he remains relatively unresponsive, able, through the tenets and idioms of English culture and an English capitalism, to stoically rationalise out of existence the circumstances that a racially mixed, religiously and culturally confused life put before him.

The play then exhibits how the collective memory in modern society is a problematic domain of knowledge and meaning. The three characters in *Faith Healer* are unable to realise a common version of their lives together, indicative of the disintegration of a collective ethic in the historical. In fact, they are all from different cultural and class conditions creating a disintegrative postmodern pluralism. If place has historically offered the stable ground of identity, a defining collective boundary which allows for shared experience, meanings and interests, binding people to the earth and to each other, this is no longer the case. The van travelling the Celtic fringe is indicative of an uprooted and unrooted existence. The Celtic places do provide a skeletal coherence, but ultimately it proves historically defleshed as Frank returns to Ballybeg to die back into the ground out of which his healing emerged and Grace returns to the metropolitan centre of London to die a lonely death.

Dancing at Lughnasa: A Petrified Pedagogy

Faith Healer marks a shift in Friel's drama in the seventies from the urban, political agenda outlined in *The Freedom of the City* and *Volunteers*, to a rural, cultural agenda, becoming more prone to take issue with modernity and its values for its erosions of folklore, magicality and paganism. *Dancing at Lughnasa* serves as an exemplum for large-scale folkloric, ritual and festive loss, the erasure of a rural, pagan tradition by an advancing modern, material version of society. The forces of economy and culture at work in the historical matrix which Friel dramatises in his history plays, *The Enemy Within*, *Translations* and *Making History*, manifest themselves in contemporary society in the structures of education and work.

As far back as *To This Hard House*, written and set in the 1950s, Friel's drama was cognitive of the effect of these structures on rural culture. The play is set in the Stone household against a background of rural depopulation, the demographic and value shift is played out in the generational conflict between Daniel, Meenbanid's village schoolmaster, and his son, Waltar, who takes up the post of schoolhead in the new industry-based town of Clareford. Having had a university education, Waltar is a sign of educational expansion in the post-war years. Friel's drama is already critical of this educational and work expansion. The school begins to manifest disadvantageous symptoms of mass modern culture, overcrowding, anonymity, lack of human contact.[14] In naming Waltar a 'petrified pedagogue', his sister emblematises the schoolhead as an insentient head of the secular values of modern life.

The forces at work in the Ballybeg of *Dancing at Lughnasa* are those of a modernity constituted by an economy of the factory, technological communications and transport and a supportive Catholic/humanist complex of practice whose focus is the Catholic school. Working through the figure of Kate Mundy, a local schoolteacher, education is once more granted a key role as the institutional

orchestrator of identity, value and feeling in the modern Irish social and cultural order. Kate Mundy plays the role of advocate and policewoman of educational practice and value in the drama. The mediation between Ballybeg as a place of paganism and pleasure and the restrained rationalism of the official sphere of ideology and practice is dramatised most fully in Kate's relationships with Michael and Father Jack. While Kate submits to the ethics of play in the childhood life, buying Michael a spinning-top, applauding his kite-building and treating him with physical affection, she also bounds and attenuates the world of play with the gravitas of the educational development of the intellect, a preparation for the responsibilities of adult life in a modernising world.

The gift of the spinning-top is counter-balanced by the more disciplinary practice of reading. Embellished with alluring coloured pictures, Kate has 'a new library book' for Michael to begin reading at bedtime. It represents an appropriation of magic by a rationalist intellectualism, the alluring sensuality of colour seduces the child into an intellectual practice. Jean Piaget chronicles the process of developing consciousness in the child in terms which imply a basic split in what he terms 'artistic or dream thought' and 'intelligent activity'. Commenting on this educational determinacy of the self, G. H. Bantock surmises that the 'reality' implicit in these definitions is that of logical deduction and empirical investigation, the world of hypotheses and the world of observation; the rest is 'whim', 'dream', 'imagination'.[15] In contrast to Kate, Maggie tries to evoke magicality in the boy's mind. She releases an imaginary butterfly into the air which Michael momentarily believes in until Maggie disillusions him: 'It was all in your mind'. It represents an instance of the magic imagination which put simply means a preparedness to believe and bask in the non-empirical. The implication is that in the material and logic structures of modernity, creativity and play is split off into what is constructed as 'imagination', a domain which is then ideologically underprivileged and culturally marshalled.

Play and festivity is constantly on the agenda in Friel's drama. It is a carnival other that keeps reappearing in Friel's cast of ludic characters - in Cass, Skinner, Keeney, Maggie, Miriam, Eamon, Doalty and Hugh O'Donnell. Maggie Mundy is the ludic spirit in *Dancing at Lughnasa* who tries to uphold an oppositional pagan value which favours play. She divulges her distaste for education. 'God, I always hated school', she tells Michael, who is applying himself studiously to improving his writing preparatory to his autumnal return to school. Her play with Michael which opens this second act inversely mirrors the earlier scene between Kate and Michael. Whereas the boy functions there as ludic foil to Kate's pedagogic principle, here it is Maggie who functions as ludic foil to Michael's word-orientated privacy.

Like the opening act of *The Enemy Within*, Act 2 of *Dancing at Lughnasa* opens with distinct emphasis upon writing materials which theatrically and semiotically signify humanist value in the play: 'Ink bottle and some paper on the kitchen table'. Maggie demonstrates her ludic otherness by dancing extravagantly up to the studious Michael and vigorously tousling his hair while singing a romantic song of itinerancy. Maggie's playful animus disturbs the private concentration and intense application required by writing. Michael emotionally expresses irritability and ink-stains blot the page. Michael is immersed in a contemporary commercial mythology and practice: he is writing to Santa Claus for a bell for his bike, which he testily informs Maggie he learned to ride at school. Writing and schooling are constructed as an integral part of the matrix of technology (of bicycles) and commercialism (the material gifts of Christmas) which is displacing traditional orality and mythology.

In a very deliberate theatricality, Maggie dispenses with the writing papers - 'She gathers up the papers' - and puts a stop to the act of writing which she features as a modern, constraining, indoor, self-centring practice. As W. J. Ong theorises, writing restructures consciousness within the internality of a self-conscious

individualism and within an ideology of the fulfilment of individual human potential and growth. In *Winners* the combatative Mag adverts to the literacy which English teaching promotes, playfully ridiculing the call to educational seriousness: 'What's the *real* difference between language and literature? I remember now...One is talking and the other is books'. Book culture is featured as individualising, privatising and silencing, fostering social distance between people. The redemptive textuality which Kate recommends is described by Ong as socially isolating: 'Texts are thing-like, immobilised in visual space...[part of] a noetic world...[which] develops individuality, privacy and isolation'.[16] Mag enunciates the value of 'sharing', but under pressure from her fiancée's rationalism is unable to see her way intellectually to the nature of the value she is evoking. Nevertheless, she still feels, intuits the value and rounds on her boyfriend's stifling bookishness:

> 'Cos you're just a selfish, cold, horrible, priggish, conceited donkey. Stuck in your old books as if they were the most important thing in the world and your - your intended waiting like a dog for you to toss her a word.

This is the value-system which Maggie countenances. She pointedly sends Michael off into the outdoors to play in the fields around Ballybeg: 'On a day like this you should be running about the field like a young calf'. In *Aristocrats*, Eamon more axiomatically contrasts the pre-literate and pre-schooling life of the lower orders of Ballybeg with that of the cultured, educated life of Ballybeg Hall by recalling 'Plebeian past times'.

Modernity: Ballybeg's Industrial Revolution

Through the regulation of structure and order commanded by Kate, education is produced as the coherent leading-edge institution of a technological, factory-centred production and consumer capitalism. The bicycle, the motor-bike, the car and the bus feature as a mechanised transport regime which mark the evolution and expansion of the range of travel and the break down of the centrality and homogeneity of the local. The bicycle figures prominently in the Ballybeg of the 1930s. As a mechanical manifestation of empirical, scientific knowledge, it is

construed by the playwright as a form of technological bridge between paganism and modernity. Marshall McLuhan notes that for Samuel Beckett the bicycle is 'the primary symbol of the Cartesian mind',[17] part of the evolutionary technology associated with the wheel, it duly takes its part in the historical development of transport and modernity.

What the mechanical bicycle tends to do is to expand and organise movement and promote the reconstruction of economic and social relationships. Kate, the authoritative, rationalist figure in the drama, is implicated in the economy of bicycle technology. She talks of getting her bicycle repaired in order that she can travel more easily to town for her household purchases. Her orbit of movement is being expanded and marks the break with the pedestrianism and self-sufficiency of a parochial Irish life. Kate's purchases from the local town suggest the reorienting of food into a consumer network rather than a local culture striving for forms of self-sufficiency and engagement with land and food, another form of displacement.

The bicycle as a mechanical vehicle which expands the range of the local is no less than the thin end of the technological wedge. Friel has already featured the breach of the rural by the mechanical in *The Communication Cord*, where Jack rides into Ballybeg on a motor-bike. In *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Gerry himself gets injured in a motor-bike accident which subsequently prevents him from dancing; the technology of modernity destroying the physicality of traditionalism. The technological advance is also coded in the figure of Austin Morgan, whose very name is a signifier of the motor car. The wealthy store-owner of the Arcade - a commercial appropriation of a pagan pastoralism - is an archetypal modern man and chief inheritor in the play of abstracted power and wealth in the Ballybeg hinterland. He is the man to whom Kate will be subordinated as an education tutor to his children. The bus is the final mode of transport figured in the play and it services the new form of factory production which signals the shift away from

domestic, rural industry to the factory-system. As Michael comments, the 'Industrial revolution had at last caught up with Ballybeg'.

It constitutes more dispossession, more displacement. Rose and Agnes emigrate as a direct consequence of the demise of the cottage-industry of glove-making which precipitates, too, the collapse of the Mundy household. They leave Ballybeg on the day Michael begins his new school-term. Such synchroncity is frequent and deeply ironic in the plots of Friel's drama. A humanist modernity, whose school-year has replaced the rural pagan year, is the source of an historical displacement whose effect upon rural inhabitants in Ireland is reconstruction within a liberal humanism for some and continuing or exacerbated emigration for others. The women emigrate to the metropolitan centre of London, an engine-house of modernity where they fall into urban forms of impoverishment, menial work, unemployment, alcoholism, homelessness, destitution and, finally, death - a destructive neo-colonial and post-colonial economic relationship between England and Ireland like the geographicalised economic and cultural relations figured in *Faith Healer* between Ballybeg, the Celtic fringe and the metropolis of London. Indeed, in Julie Kavanagh's article 'Friel at Last', she records that the inspiration for *Dancing at Lughnasa* came to Friel one night when he was walking along London's Strand with a fellow Field Day playwright, Tom Kilroy. She records:

> Looking at the cardboard-quilted vagrants sleeping in shop doorways, Friel said, "I'm sure some of these are Irish people," and recounted the story of his two aunts, who lived rough in London and died young as penniless alcoholics. "Write a play about it," said Kilroy.[18]

The drama includes a narrative of the destitute Irish in London. The two women are outcasts in the streets of London which currently house homeless and destitute people, while ironically the theatre which houses Friel's play is located in those same streets where audiences applaud and celebrate these same 'type' of figures at the cultural level of entertainment and drama.

A Modern Hieroglyph of the Pagan Unconscious

What issues in the sphere of culture from a modernity premised on intellectualism and science, education and technology, school and work is the cultural media of book, film, gramophone and radio. These feature prominently in the play as technological, commodity artefacts which dramatically reorientate the site of cultural production, from the oral to the technological production of the word, from the communal and public to the cellular and private and from the local to the national. The radio is the major sign in the play of these technological and cultural changes taking place in rural Ballybeg. Terence Brown writes about the radio as an increasingly popular form of home entertainment in the 1930s in Ireland after the 'high-powered station at Athlone had been opened'.[19] The siting of the station in the capital of the Irish Midlands marks the technological relocation of traditional Irish cultural centres and a shift away from the local and the communal to externalised headquarters.

The radio is invested with the 'magic' of modernity, which is signified in the drama as the black magic of a dispossessing corporate culture. Given as 'Marconi's voodoo', the radio-transmitted folk-music disturbs the rural psyche: 'I had witnessed Marconi's voodoo derange these kind, sensible women and transform them into shrieking strangers'. Marshall McLuhan has labelled the radio a 'tribal drum' whose auditory imagery subliminally draws on communal and oral tradition evoking 'archaic tribal ghosts of the most vigorous kind'.[20] He claims it commits a form of violence upon the racial unconscious of cultures distanced from their folk and pagan heritage. The musicality of the radio produces an auditoriness fraught with primal, tribal experience: 'the kitchen throbbing with the beat of Irish dance music beamed to us from Dublin'. The primal psychic resonances subverts order, on the other hand it induces a form of hysteria, a reawakening of memory in a decontextualised form as Friel's stage-notes inform. The dance is a 'parodic reel' with grotesque rather than harmonious movement.

The Irish dance music proves compelling and communal, animating and releasing libidinous, affective, bodily and cultural energies. A strangeness from within, four of the sisters dance collectively with Dionysian fervour : 'They form a circle and wheel round and round', a theatrical statement of the communal festive life. Ballybeg itself is animated and galvanised by the collective festive rites of Lughnasa. Kate informs her sisters that 'Ballybeg is off it's head. I'm telling you. Everywhere you go - everyone you meet - it's the one topic. Are you going to the harvest dance?'. Kate speaks here of the collectivising carnival feelings in an unreconstructed world of libidinous, affective, pagan feeling. Kate later asks 'Are we mad?' when discussing attendance at the dance. The world is collectivised and turned upside down on the holiday, carnival occasion and in the kitchen dance. In contrast to the community of the dance, Kate, although aroused by the commanding rhythms of the music, remains isolated, constructed in a contemporary self-absorbed individualism which suppresses her natural, affective social energies. Kate's response to the radio music is to dance 'totally concentrated, totally private'.

Manufacturing Otherness

The Festival of Lughnasa, named after Lug the old Celtic God of the Harvest, a ritual practice over 2000 years old, is under pressure and disappearing at a specific point in time in the modern age, as modernity, a reconstruction of value, social structure and epistemology effects the world-view of Ireland and brings about a rural depopulation, to boot. The fire and courting rites ventilate Dionysian energies, rather like Jack's account of the Ryangan Festivals. Rose's plucking of blackberries, her lustful plunge into the cans, 'takes a fistful of berries and thrusts the fistful into her mouth', re-awakens notions of pagan fertility ritual, Dinoysian Irish rites held at the height of summer. Though the rites are waning, Maggie Mundy, the pagan spirit in the family, suggests the new radio that has recently appeared in the rural household be called after Lugh - it would at least be a way in which the cultural past is vestigially kept alive in memory. As moral guardian of

the Mundy household, Kate administers the *caeromonia nominationis*, refusing the pagan naming of the radio as Lugh:

> But Aunt Kate - she was a national schoolteacher and a very proper woman - she said it would be sinful to christen an inanimate object with any kind of name, not to talk of a pagan god. So we just called it Marconi because that was the name emblazoned on the set.

As Friel reveals in *Translations*, the ritual of naming is a vital act of culture, an act of value, an act of constructing consciousness, and, potentially, an act of repression. The lexical elements in a culture encode meaning and value indicating how memory loss of the cultural past takes place in the historical. The commercial trademark of Marconi, an American company, names the radio and symbolises its invasive, imperialistic, commodity and cultural status and its reordering structures of feeling. Kate's Catholic/humanist/capitalist naming of culture with its salient morality and materiality is a power discourse whose epistemology denies the pagan world-view and arbitrates in favour of the modern. What is being witnessed in the drama is the colonisation by an epistemological universe of a nativist culture through a monied technological culture.

The reconstruction of meaning and feeling also operates through recodifying traditionalist images in the semiotic system of a commodity culture. The culture of the advert reinvocates older forms of life in order to promote and process the modern form of society. With due historical irony, the pagan Maggie is attributed a dependency on cigarettes which are entitled 'Wild Woodbine', signifiers of the official system which are semiotically exploitative and appropriating of the imagination of the traditional pagan culture. This is signified, too, in the naming of the radio and gramophone company whose title is 'Minerva Gramophones', the Roman goddess of wisdom is transferred to a technological pantheon. Or in terms of the commodified culture of writing, it is Kate as purveyor of books, buying Michael a highly-coloured reading book and purchasing for Agnes a novel entitled *The Marriage of Nurse Harding*, a romantic fiction whose title signifies official

female roles within marriage and work in bourgeois culture, who pedals new self-images for the women of Ballybeg.

The control of the means of communication has been relocated outside of Ballybeg. The world is turned upside down as the *local* becomes the *instrument* of culture rather than culture being the instrument of the local, incorporated within structures and discourses of power which names it as an *otherness* rather then the 'thing itself'. The world of signs, written and visual, belong to the power who own and order the realm of writing and communication located in the urban centres of political and technological power. Reading books, film, radio, gramophone are the new source of cultural experience which fills up the Irish imagination, part of a popular cultural matrix which Teddy stands for in *Faith Healer*. The current outcome of the historical colonisations dramatised in *The Enemy Within*, *Making History* and *Translations* is that the culture of the local has become institutionalised and produced elsewhere, becoming not an expressive agent of a people's subjectivity and communality but an administrative agency which produces culture filtered through its own power and commercial interests.

A Pagan Place

Kate represents the contemporary consciousness with its approved modes of thought, feeling, imagery and practice which has forgotten or displaced her Celtic past. Kate's memory is at one point highly commended; 'She'll remember. Kate forgets nothing'. In fact, Kate has forgotten an enormous amount, a whole cultural heritage has been rendered invisible by the Catholic and humanist suppressions and replacements. Instead, Kate has acquired an excellent utilitarian memory for remembering the lists of necessities required in a commodity and task-oriented life and reciting the ethics of her Catholic religion. It is from this position that a Catholic and humanist culture anxiously monitors the underlay of the pagan cultural stratum in Irish history and the Irish psyche.

Reworking the Manichean patterns present in colonial discourses of degeneracy, Kate demonises Sweeney and his fellow revellers:

> And they're savages! I know those people from the back hills! I've taught them! Savages - that's what they are! And what pagan practices they have are no concern of ours - none whatever! It's a sorry day to hear talk like that in a Christian home! All I can say is that I'm shocked and disappointed to hear you [Rose] repeating rubbish like that, Rose!

This is a Catholic/humanist discourse of the civilian and the barbarian, illustrating the construction of Sweeney as primitive and pagan, an archetypal outlaw whom Heaney reintroduces into modern culture in his translation *Sweeney Astray* and in 'Sweeney Redivivus'(*SI*), a figure outside of educational and church regulation and parameters of morality. The puritanical attitude of Catholic and Protestant moralities have historically attacked dancing and festivity, viewing them as libidinous, saturnalian rituals. Kate's moralism exhibits a guilt rhetoric which invites shame and apology from the subordinated transgressor, Rose, accused of involvement in the Sweeney rites on the back hills.

But Kate, herself, is possessed by a sense of unease about the pending collapse of the Mundy household under pressure from contradictory pagan and modern forces:

> You work hard at your job. You try to keep the home together. You perform your duties as best you can - because you believe in responsibilities and obligations and good order. And then suddenly, suddenly you realise that hair cracks are appearing everywhere; that the whole thing is so fragile it can't be held together much longer. It's all about to collapse.

The 'cracks' she speaks of are wrought by the forces of a residual pagan traditionalism contending with a dominant moral and economic progressivism, a case of struggle between a pagan libido and a rationalising law, between pre-industrial tradition and a penetrative modernity. The anxiety in Kate's moral alarm reveals regimental social order to be an ideological facade which masks out the tensions between libidinous human and cultural desires and the structural drives of an expansionist capitalism. As the play develops, Kate conveys mounting anxiety over the presence of the itinerant Gerry, the pagan festivities of Lughnasa, the

pagan behaviour of Jack and the propensity for the sublimated paganism to break through into her own consciousness. The racial memory which Friel proposes in the drama is a form of Jungian Irish collective unconscious, a concept which Seamus Heaney, who calls Irish bogland 'Jungian ground', also entertains in his polemics and poetry. At the point of sensing the collapse of domestic rural life, she involuntarily recounts the antics of Sweeney around the Lughnasa fires - and then reflects 'Don't know why that came into my head'.

Father Jack is the figure in the drama who is suffering most stressfully from memory loss, a cultural amnesia which is linked to the introduction of radio to Ballybeg and his priestly membership of the Catholic Church. Jack's narrative of pagan reclamation of his consciousness is rooted in his missionary period in Africa. It is here that the historical overlay of cultural and linguistic colonisation begins to break up. The tribal landscape of Africa and the pagan store in the Swahili language which has entered Jack's psyche converts him back to a paganism from which he is descended in Ireland. Recalling the pagan tribal rituals of Africa, Jack makes a correspondence between African and Irish traditions: 'In some ways they *are not unlike us*'.

Father Jack's activity in Africa is terminated by the Catholic hierarchy because of his retrograde behaviour which was a refusal of missionary Roman Catholic values and a colonialist English capitalism. He rejects the monetary values and the social system that English imperialism orders in alliance with the Catholic mission: 'If you cooperate with the English they give you lots of money for churches and schools and hospitals. And he [Catholic head of missions] gets so angry with one because I won't take that money'. Jack favours an African paganism in which an institutionalised colonial system of morality, education and health is rendered redundant, catered for by the natural and cultural ethics of pagan society - a ritual festive life, witch-doctor medicine and a non-individualistic property ethic. Father Jack's is a rebellion which later effects Kate in Ballybeg who

loses her job as a schoolteacher at the local Catholic school because of Jack's strange pagan behaviour.

The drama of *Dancing at Lughnasa* is in effect a reversal of the historical currents which Columba commits himself to in *The Enemy Within*. Back in Ballybeg and forgetting much of his English vocabulary - his niece Kate comments that Jack has 'difficulty finding the English words for what he wants to say' - Jack's regression from a Catholic to a pagan priesthood, began in Africa, becomes complete. On his return home Kate recommends to Jack a restorative for his confused mind: regular walks around the locale of Ballybeg. But it is a ritual which instead results in the originary pre-colonial map of Ballybeg as a pagan place breaking through and reclaiming his consciousness. His mind is invigorated by memories of the residual pagan presences of his childhood - remembering his mother's part in the blackberry picking at Lughnasa and reciting native childhood rhymes of the countryside wondering, like Kate does at times, 'Where on earth did that come from? You see, Kate, it's all coming back'. The re-entry of an evocative, ritualist, pagan past into his mind breaks down the empire within constructed by the ascetic and material forces borne or internalised by the representative historical figures of Columba, Mary Bagenal and Lancey in Friel's dramas of the Irish past.

Jack increasingly inhabits a pagan universe and begins to perform rites and rituals of symbolic exchange - of hats with Gerry, of tribal dancing, incantation and even sacrifice - the question is who killed the rooster, the fox or Jack? Encouraged by Father Jack's recall and ritual practice, the spirit of place and the spirit of the corn reclaim the sensibility of the country folk during the play.

Jack, however is destined to die - the mythical spirit historically defeated, the Ballybeg space passing forever beyond his reach. He is nominated in the play as the 'Irish Outcast' which links him with the other culturally exiled males in the

drama, Lugh, Sweeney and Gerry Evans, and creates him as a decentred and displaced form of life which has been made outlaw by colonising Catholic, English Protestant and Humanist ingressors, to become a form of *otherness*. Like Frank Hardy in *Faith Healer*, Jack has come back to Ballybeg to die back into the ground out of which he emerged, dying 'within a year of his homecoming, on the very eve of the following La Lughnasa'. Jack's return is ultimately a form of death rite - an instance of the god Lugh whose cycle of seasonal and ritual life has not been able to survive the modern times. Michael affirms this historical ritual death in recounting how that with the decease of Jack and the leave-taking of Rose and Agnes to London, the metropolis of modernity, the heart and the spirit go out of the house.

The Fracturing of Otherness

Gerry exhibits in a material form the outcome of the displacement from the Celtic history in which Father Jack is spiritually implicated. Like many of Friel's protagonists, he is not only a character-individual, but also an historical-individual, an outsider born into conditions and circumstances which precipitate the individual's displacement. Gerry is a Welsh Celt, born into a history which has become powerfully capitalistic. In Weber's terms:

> The capitalist economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born and which presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationship's, to conform to capitalist rules of action.'[21]

Gerry's attempts to engage with capitalist modes of technical and commodity sales are precarious and shot through with failure: a gramophone salesman, he can't sell any; a dancing teacher where the enterprise fails; a man around the house who can't repair the radio; a father who promises to buy Michael a bicycle, though it is uncertain that he ever does; an enlisted soldier in the Spanish Civil War for no constructive reason he can grasp; a motor-bike dispatch-rider, he gets injured in a motor-bike accident. The motives for joining the Spanish civil war symptomise Gerry's aimless life. He does not profess to any doctrines of capitalism or socialism

nor to any other creeds of rationalist political philosophy. Rather, the list of material doctrines he does recite show the fragmentation and conflict in rationalist cultures. The utilitarian fact that he can ride a motor-bike is what gets him into the war and is what ultimately physically damages him.

Seamus Deane draws analogies between the itinerant figure of twentieth-century Irish literature and those of Friel's drama: 'The tramps of Yeats and Synge and Beckett, the stationless slum dwellers of O'Casey or Behan, bear a striking family resemblance to Friel's exiles'.[22] Many of Friel's dramas offer cultural narratives of upheaval and displacement, of migration and emigration, deviancy and itinerancy cast in the roles of the missionary, the political exile, the emigré, the revenant, the commercial traveller, the faith healer, the showman, the volunteer, the unemployed, the travelling salesman. All symptomise the plight of a society in which uprootedness, wandering and itinerancy are 'central rather than peripheral, to the way in which Irish society...exercises itself'.[23] Like the nomadic Frank Hardy, Gerry too endures as an itinerant, a charmer who dances, sings, jokes, seduces women - Chris Mundy has had his child out of wedlock - and leads a foot-loose and fancy-free life.

In these guises, he is a variegated species of Synge's playboy, Christy Mahon, in *Playboy of the Western World*. With no authentic identity available to him in the disintegrated western world of Celtic Wales and Ireland, the vestigial pagan cannot be transmogrified into the place and play of the festive life, he can only imitate or mimic romantic, flirtatious roles of modernity. He regrets the absence of a stable place, naming it as the crisis of modern man: 'Maybe that's the important thing for a man: a named destination - democracy, Ballybeg, heaven'. Like Private Gar in *Philadeplhia, Here I Come*, who, in a psychic defence against the pain of departure from Ballybeg, condemns the local 'bloody yap...and sentimental rubbish about "homeland" and "birthplace"...Impermanence -

anonymity - that's what I'm looking for'; Gerry's geography is unable to mediate his life, his Celticism, which is the claiming and fulfilling dimension of place.

A Time to Dance

Gerry's modernist/pagan ambiguity is strongly signified in the act of dancing, the play's major signifier of the cultural life of rural Ballybeg. The waltz appears as the expression of a modernist and monogamous form of culture. Dancing to music of a popular culture transmitted through radio and gramophone, this dance style secures the privatisation of feeling and relationship in the relations between romantic twosomes. It is a form of dancing which produces divisive jealousy, instead of the shared feeling which courses through the collective in the festive dancing portrayed in the drama. Gerry has a close, intimate relationship with Chrissie, but flirts with Agnes, singing to her a suggestive libidinous popular song. And he flirts too with Maggie, and is about to dance with her as well, but Chris's monagamous jealousy inhibits any more casual emotional and sexual liaison. When Chris proposes Maggie and Gerry dance, Maggie teases: 'Artistes like Margaret Mundy can't perform on demand, Chrissie. We need to be in touch with other forces first, don't we Gerry?'. Like Frank, Gerry is also *cut off from the* primal id and libido. In a Celtic inheritance Gerry would be the ideal candidate for the polygamous role of the husband within the kind of African rural commune Father Jack recommends for rural cultures: 'the husband and his wives and his children make up a small commune where everybody helps everybody else and cares for them'.

Like Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen* and the later drama of *Bailegangaire* by Tom Murphy, Friel locates a number of his dramas in a specific sense of local place and within specific domestic, rural spaces, *Dancing at Lughnasa* being set in and around the domestic and rural feminine space of the Mundy household. The theatrical space evokes a local space which is representative of a 'national space'

with a legendary, mythical ethos and structure of feeling attaching to it which invests realist geography and temporality with a dream-world quality.[24] The finale of the drama presents a scene of sensuous communalism with the whole family gathered for an outdoor feast on a warm September afternoon: 'Dancing as if language had surrendered to movement - as if this ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper, private and sacred things, to be in touch with some otherness'. In the intimate sway of dance, a sensualised communal body and an evocative affective core of feeling overgoes a rationalist intellectual and linguistic relation to place recalling the closing lines to Yeats's 'Among Schoolchildren''O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,/ How can we know the dancer from the dance?'.

This closing scene paints a non-discursive picture of a distinctive and different form of cultural practice and remembering to that of the modern and to that which can be recorded intellectually: 'memory of that Lughnasa time...It owes nothing to fact. In that memory atmosphere is more real than incident'. In *Aristocrats*, the American academic and historian, Tom Hoffnung, perceiving 'the house as a specimen',[25] spends the entire play seeking to understand the Ballybeg house of the Catholic Ascendancy as an object knowledge, a form of empirical scientific study which seeks to describe the facts of history supported by anecdotal evidence. The ambiguously positioned Eamon, local Ballybeg peasant who has married into the declining gentry, comments, however, to the family descendant Casimir, that there are 'certain things, certain truths, that are beyond Tom's kind of scrutiny'. There is an imaginative relationship, a cultural landscape of feeling, atmosphere, relationship indescribable in print culture, though available to the theatre.

Memory is not only intellectual and contained within language but also affective, the past sensually and intuitively experienced and apprehended. Julie Kavanagh observes of *Dancing at Lughnasa* that 'Like music, dance confesses what

can't or shouldn't be spoken...The play says: "Don't talk any more, no more words"'.[26] Friel's medium is not so much language but rather the wordless, spiritual pagan vitality of movement and symbol. Through non-discursive dance, music, lighting, totem, symbol, the body and the body social, Friel evokes an oceanic structure of feeling. Ruminates the playwright, 'When you come to the large elements and mysteries of life they are ineffable. Words fail us at moments of great emotion. Language has become depleted for me in some way; words have lost their accuracy and precision. So I use dance in the play as a surrogate for language'.[27]

Friel has said that the drama is 'about the necessity for paganism'.[28] The non-rational, non-discursive realms evoke archaic and dream-like states of Irish consciousness, pagan realms of the free play of the senses and feelings institutionalised in the rituals of the festive life. The designs on Michael's kites are the free expression of the boy's unfettered imagination - a form of articulation of the racial memory. Kate questions their nature, 'What are they/ Devils? Ghosts?'. The kite represents play and pleasure in the drama in a dialectic with the pen which represents privacy and sensory and communal privation. It is only at the conclusion of the play that the audience sights the images for the first time: 'On each kite is painted a crude, cruel, grinning face, primitively drawn, garishly painted'. Michael has produced an archaic art of the grotesque, the masks and pictograms are hieroglyphs of the energies and spirits of the instinctual, earthly life, the expression of archetypes in the collective unconscious of the people. The racial memory, though sublimated, persists.

In a post-colonial epoch, Friel is left to reflect upon the making of the contemporary cultural memory and meaning and to intervene on his own account through text and drama into public memory. Again the process of producing 'images of the past embodied in language' comes into play. His dramas about the degrading of the cultural memory also reciprocally reinstate something of the loss -

a restoration through the public act of drama and textual propagation. The irony that endures is that the playwright, the wordsmith, who feels the destructive power of the word in his own cultural history, is still left to deal in the languages and media of that culture. *Dancing at Lughnasa* suggests that the history which Friel writes against cannot be transcended. What Friel offers is not so much a counter-hegemony but more a 'counter-memory', the term which Michel Foucault uses in his sequence of essays entitled *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* to raise issues about the reformation of discourses in social consciousness. Friel's images of the past attempts to re-embody structures of Celtic and Gaelic feeling which constitute the hidden layers of contemporary Irish identity.

1. Ania, Loomba, 'Seizing the Books', in *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, p.142-58 (p.153).

2. G. H. Bantock, *Education, Culture and the Emotions*, p.116.

3. Alan Baddeley, *Your Memory: A User's Guide*, p.202.

4. Quoted by Ulf Dantanus, *Brian Friel: A Study*, p.87.

5. Seamus Heaney, 'Feeling into Words', in *Preoccupations*, pp.41-60 (pp.47-8).

6. Seamus Deane, 'Seamus Heaney: The Timorous and the Bold', in *Celtic Revivals*, pp.174-86 (p.176).

7. Brian Friel, 'Self-Portrait', *Acorn*, 3 (1972), 17-22 (p.21).

8. Richard Kearney, 'The Language Plays of Brian Friel', in *Transitions: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture*, pp.123-60 (p.124).

9. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p.135.

10. Etherton, Michael, 'The Plays of Brian Friel, in *Contemporary Irish Dramatists*, pp.147-208 (p.199).

11. Seamus Deane, 'Brian Friel: The Double Stage', in *Celtic Revivals*, pp.166-73 (p.173).

12. Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, p.79.

13. Richard Kearney. p.128.

14. This reading of the poem is indebted to D.E.S. Maxwell's remarks on the drama in his study entitled *Brian Friel*.

15. G. H. Bantock, *Education and Values*, p.21.

16. Waltar J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, p.100/p.126.

17. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p.183.

18. Julie Kavanagh, 'Friel at Last', *Vanity Fair*, October 1991, 49-53 (pp.50-1).

19. Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-1985*, p.153.

20. Marshall McLuhan, p.301.

21. Max Weber, p.54.

22. Seamus Deane, 'Introduction', in *Selected Plays of Brian Friel*, pp.11-22 (pp.14-15).

23. Richard Pine, *Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama*, p.4.

24. Compare Friel's drama with Mark Lane's reading of Thomas Murphy's sense of theatrical and parochial Irish space in 'Theatrical Space and

National Place in Four Plays by Thomas Murphy', *Irish University Review*, 21 (1991), 219-228.

25. George O'Brien, *Brian Friel*, p.83.

26. Julie Kavanagh, p.50.

27. Brian Friel quoted in Julie Kavanagh, p.50.

28. Brian Friel quoted in Julie Kavanagh, p.50.

CHAPTER 5: THE DIALECTIC OF DWELLING AND DETACHMENT

Like Friel, Heaney's art is also located on a terrain which involves him in a negotiation between the magic, folkloric, sacred sense of place and an historical colonialism and encroaching modernity which have made the hinterland of Mossbawn in mid-Ulster a politically and metaphysically problematised space. Heaney's essay 'Mossbawn' begins by importing the imagery of a sacral Greek centre into the Irish landscape in order to mythically mark his own point of origin in Mossbawn:

> I would begin with the Greek word, *omphalos*, meaning the centre of the world, and repeat it, *omphalos, omphalos, omphalos*, until its blunt and falling music becomes the music of somebody pumping water at the pump outside our back door.[1]

Later in the essay Heaney remembers the pump being sunk into the ground, emblematic of the childhood self rooted in place and community and the poet's rootedness in the soil of Mossbawn:

> I remember, too, men coming to sink the shaft of the pump and digging through that seam of sand down into the bronze riches of the gravel, that soon began to puddle with the spring water. That pump marked an original descent into the earth, sand, gravel, water. It centred and staked the imagination, made its foundation the foundation of the *omphalos* itself...ratifies this hankering for the underground side of things.[2]

The symbolic structuring of the *omphalos* imagery construes the artesian waters and dark subterranean earth as a sacred feminine matrix of originary personal and cultural being which textures the lyrical and erotic, atavistic and necrophile structures of native feeling in Heaney's poetry.

But these id-like and libidinous feelings are intruded upon and contingent on a history of colonialism and modernisation. Displacement in Heaney's poetic is a personal radical split between childhood innocence and immersion and adult

experience and detachment mediated by the practices and institutions of liberal capitalism. Interventionist into relationships with the tribe, the community, the family, the farm, the maternal structures, the landscape and the earth have been humanist and technological processes of change similar to those apparent in Friel's drama.

On The Road

The forces of modernity at work within the Irish rural environment are represented in Friel's theatre by a whole series of technological artefacts colonial in their source. Numbered amongst these signs of alterity are the watch obtained from Elizabeth's court which Hugh O'Neill gifts to his wife in *Making History*, the Royal Engineers theodolite which technically reviews the landscape in *Translations*, the radio which displaces local cultural tradition in *Dancing at Lughnasa* and the motor-bike which generates a mock drama of ruralism in *The Communication Cord.* Heaney's early poems 'At a Potato Digging' in *Death of a Naturalist* and 'A Lough Neagh Sequence' in *Door into the Dark* configure the forces within Irish culture which operate uneasily alongside a technological modernity. The mechanistic potato-digger in the potato fields and the sluice gates on the Bann estuary at Toomebridge are in tension with the power of an elemental landscape, a cyclical nature and a spirit of place which has determined the Ulster agrarian, religious and historical life. However, it is the car which appears as the key marker in Heaney's poetry for the changed conditions of modern life.

The imagery of the car, the poet driving and the open road provides a structural motif which signals in Heaney's *oeuvre* the modern journey of the uprooted migrant away from his home ground steeped in a traditional agrarian culture and a pagan, Catholic metaphysics, to fashion a life within a liberal humanist and capitalist culture, though the latter is already inscribed in the former and isn't only 'elsewhere'. The record of the modern journey begins in

'Honeymoon Flight' in *Death of a Naturalist* which figures a rite of social and marital passage away from the home locale of Mossbawn framed within the terms of a technology of aeroplane and road travel: 'The long grey tapes of road that bind and loose/ Villages and fields in casual marriage'. A material technology breaks the ties that bind the individual to traditional forms of rural community and place, and is commensurate with modern forms of marriage and nuclear family life which turns the ancestral and personal world upside down: 'We bank above the small lough and farmhouse/ And the sure green world goes topsy-turvy/ As we climb out of our familiar landscape'. It is a moment of turbulence for the couple, newly uprooted and itinerant in the modern world: 'Air-pockets jolt our fears and down we go./ Travellers, at this point, can only trust'.

Door into the Dark contains an expanding vision of Ireland and a distancing through modern lifestyle and travel from the home ground. 'The Peninsula' ('just drive/ For a day all around the peninsula'), 'Elegy For A Still-Born Child' ('I drive by remote control on this bare road), 'At Ardboe Point' ('windscreen/ The grill and bonnet whisper') and 'Shoreline' ('Turning a corner, taking a hill'), show the poet visiting a larger Ireland, motoring along coastline and shoreline, returning home with expanded knowledges and an altering vision of locale, province and country. The landscape and culture is witnessed from the removed perspective of the car which is also the detached, informed perspective of the educated man, the linguist, the historian, the geographer and the anthropologist.

'The Peninsula' shows the poet coming to an educated consciousness of landscape as a site which can be read culturally and linguistically: 'now you will uncode all landscapes/ By this: things founded clean on their own shapes,/ Water and ground in their extremity'. On the drive along the Irish coast in 'Shoreline', 'tide/ Rummaging in' converts to an image of historical waves of colonisation, of Celts, Danes and Normans and a self-conscious knowledge about Irish linguistic etymologies: 'Strangford, Arklow, Carrickfergus,/ Belmullet and Ventry/ Stay,

forgotten like sentries'. The travelling man is lodged in a modern, deconstructive literary vision similar to Brian Friel in *Translations*, for example, generated by social mobility and educational and artistic forms of literacy.

Modernity: The Division of the World

Raymond Williams' study *The English Novel From Dickens to Lawrence* gives to humanist restructuring of the individual within society a history which can explain how Heaney and Friel are caught up in a universalising narrative of modernity in which education functions as a key agency of change. Williams cites George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence as writers who originate in lower order rural and parochial life and depart from home to receive formal schooling within a modernising culture of education:

> George Eliot was at school till sixteen...Hardy was at Dorchester High School till the same age and then completed his professional training as an architect. Lawrence went into the sixth form at Nottingham High School and after a gap went on to Nottingham University College.[3]

The lives of these writers are recognised to be symptomatic of transformations taking place in a rising industrial urban capitalist society whose primary institutions of education and work are functional in breaking down more stable, customary ways of life. Through their novels these writers act as bearers of and witnesses to the dynamic of change taking place in the society, 'a crisis of experience, often quite personally felt and endured'.[4] Eliot, Hardy and Lawrence are avatars of a tradition of writers who, displaced from their customary way of life by powerful forces of modernity, are reconstituted within a word-centred, literate and literary culture which records that same personal and public experience.

As Williams reflects, such a tradition has special importance to twentieth-century post-war generations who 'have gone to the university from ordinary families and have to discover, through a life, what that experience means'.[5] Geographical, social and cultural mobility, promoted by education and executed by the passage through the humanist institutions of teaching and writing, of the kind

apparent in Friel's *To This Hard House*, detaches the young Heaney, beneficiary of the 1947 Education Act, from Mossbawn and redefines the cultural norms by which he lives his life. The opening poem of Heaney's first published volume, 'Digging' in *Death of a Naturalist*, installs the dialectic of dwelling and detachment which fashions relations to Mossbawn. The self-image of the writer, 'Between my finger and my thumb/ The squat pen rests./ I'll dig with it', inaugurates the paradox at the heart of the poet's personal relationship to his originating place and community. The pen signifies that which separates the adult metropolitan migrant from a childhood nativism is education, language and his literary vocation. In response to Tom Adair's interview question: 'At what stage was it clearly a non-expectation that you'd spend your life at Mossbawn?', Heaney pin-points education as the major cause of the breach:

> Well, I would say from the minute that I got the eleven-plus. That just *divided* the world. I never thought much about what I was going to do, but there was a sort of unspoken realisation that you'd probably be a schoolteacher.[6]

'The Play Way' in *Death of a Naturalist* celebrates the ideology of education and writing at a point at which Heaney is being fashioned in opposition to his classmates. Heaney shares with his Anahorish primary school teacher the esteem for classical music and the critical medium of writing which the culture and the poem's discourse codify as individualising and liberating, the self set free by the uplift of Beethoven's Fifth ('Working its private spell behind eyes/ That stared wide') and the autonomous medium of writing ('class will express themselves freely/ In writing'). Contrarily, orality is the implied medium of his classmates immersed in the collectivism of a popular and rural culture from which Heaney becomes differentiated.

Alan Robinson calls the 'The Wanderer'in *Stations* Heaney's 'poignant self-assessment'[7] in which the poet looks back to the award at his primary school of a scholarship to St Columb's College in Derry, registering his separation from the local collective and the beginning of his 'migrant solitude':

> 'At the end of the holidays this man's going away to Derry, so this is for him winning the scholarship...We all wish him good luck. Now back to your places.'

The formal and emotional finality of *places* elicits the poignancy. While Heaney's local peers assume their original positions in class, remaining in the place they originate from, Heaney alone is to depart to boarding school, then onto Queen's University and a teaching and literary vocation. In a profile of the poet's life, Heaney has said of the scholarship to boarding school 'Certainly it set me apart from my family'.[8] In his fourth sonnet of 'Clearances' in *The Haw Lantern* Heaney remembers in a manner reminiscent of the experience recorded in the poetry of Tony Harrison and analysed in Ken Worpole's 'Scholarship Boy: The Poetry of Tony Harrison' the crisis in relation between mother and son precipitated by the boy's educational knowledges and language. The mother anxiously self-dramatises incomprehension, 'Fear of affectation made her affect/ Inadequacy', as she negotiates an educated knowledge described as 'beyond her'. The son feeling constructed in condescension also gives way to self-dramatisation, adopting a mediating parochial guise by speaking in the language of the ordinary life of home. He now has to *play* his uneducated self, so far has he travelled from home.

'Belfast' exhibits how Heaney's learning evolves into the maturer processes of a literary art which, from the locus of an altered cultural and geographical environment, can take stock of that autobiographical experience of displacement from an originary place. He remembers the low level of activity at Queen's around the turn of the 1960s and then the uplift he experienced as a member of the literary group who congregated around the figure of Philip Hobsbaum in the mid-sixties. It was during this era of his life that Heaney began to write and have his poetry published. In November 1962 his first poem 'Tractor' was published in the *Belfast Telegraph* and by 1964 Heaney was having poems published in the *New Statesman*. 'Digging' was one of those poems of which Heaney remarks:

> 'Digging', in fact, was the name of the first poem I wrote when I thought my feelings had got into words...I wrote it in the summer of 1964, almost

> two years after I had begun to 'dabble' in verses...the poem had for me the force of an initiation.[9]

'Digging' self-consciously features the private and solipsistic poet, living what the poet calls 'the generic life of the newly upward mobile eleven-plus Catholic',[10] scrutinising the unlettered, non-literary life on the farmlands of south Derry from the geographical locus of Belfast and the cultural locus of education and literature. As John Wilson Foster puts it, 'Digging' represents a manifesto of the 'ex-peasant, newly urbanised, newly middle-class poet'[11] who proclaims his cultural and economic alternative to the agrarian life.

The Learned and the Illiterate

Raymond Williams maintains it is the insights of the 'consciously learned history' and the 'educated understanding' acquired by the writer who has been through the formal schooling process which allow Hardy, Lawrence, Eliot and such figures as Heaney and Friel to observe and write about the life and traditions out of which they have emerged. One immediate effect of the experience is the creation of a split in consciousness which generates an epistemological disturbance of the kind Heaney records:

> One half of one's sensibility is in a cast of mind that comes from belonging to a place, an ancestry, a history, a culture, whatever one wants to call it. But consciousness and quarrels with the self are the result of what Lawrence called 'the voices of my education'.[12]

This binary mind-set generates a twofold knowledge of place which the poet has said in 'The Sense of Place' are antipathetic but complementary:

> One is lived, illiterate and unconscious, the other learned, literary and conscious.[13]

Illiterate as used here condenses two convergent meanings of the term, the notion of illiteracy as the incapacity to read and write, to engage effectively in a lettered world, but also the idea of a life-experience which is unmediated by a system of letters which is the meaning essentially invoked here as the poet's memory about a conversation on literacy testifies:

> Dan Jacobson said to me once, 'You feel bloody well guilty about writing', and there is indeed some part of me that is entirely unimpressed by the activity, that doesn't dislike it, but it's the generations, I suppose, of rural ancestors - not illiterate, but not literary.[14]

The term unconscious is also somewhat ambiguous. It signifies at the first level the immersion in an illiterate matrix of childhood being, an experience which is sensory, affective, visceral and ritual, unselfconsciously received. At the second level it refers to the hidden, suppressed structures which prescribe and fashion the unselfconscious received and learned identities. There are effectively, then, three layers or levels of awareness built into the relationship between the learned, literary and conscious and the lived, illiterate and unconscious: the conscious literary enquiry; immersed childhood experience; the hidden structures which order experience.

Making Strange

The dialectic between dwelling and detachment, the illiterate and the literate, the immersed and the conscious, generates in Heaney's art an auditory and ocular imagery which configures the poet's insight into his originary Mossbawn locale. In *Death of a Naturalist* the self-reflexive, often surreal imagery of the eye features in many of the poems of epiphanic or estranging insight: the 'rainbow eye' of the rat whom the poet outstares in 'An Advancement of Learning' - a play-off against Baconian rationalism -, the bright-eyed bats and 'great blind rats' peering out of the darkness in 'The Barn', the 'Confucian eye' of the turkey in 'Turkeys Observed', the 'bulls-eye' of the trout ('Trout') and the shootists ('Dawn Shoot'), the eye that rides suicidally over and down the tumult of waterfall ('Waterfall'), the 'blind-eyed', 'slit-eyed' blighted tubers ('At a Potato Digging'), the 'gaping eyes/ Bursting like spring onions' ('For the Commander of the Eliza') of the famine victims and the 'big dark blobs [that] burned/ Like a plate of eyes' on top of the rotting cache of blackberries ('Blackberry-Picking'). This graphic, violent, perceptual imagery signals the death of a certain way of seeing and apprehending experience which

gives *Death of a Naturalist* its title. It supersedes a notion that the natured and human worlds are indeed benign sites of being.

The emblematic title poem represents perhaps the most powerful expression in the volume of the child's anxious apprehension of the estranging natural and human life-forces lying deep within Ulster life. In the first instance, the poem offers an account of the young boy's experience of collecting frogspawn from the local flax-dam mediated for the child by the tamed and domesticated natural world imagined by the infants' school-teacher Miss Walls.[15] Her name divulges the feminine modesty of primary school maternalism and the boundaries which her socio-sexual identity constructs around consciousness. Her sentimentalised discourse on the mammy and daddy frogs emerges from a repressive civilised centre which colludes with the repressive ideologies of official society. It represents a blunted sensibility which masks out a more sinister, primitivist and barbarian reality inherent within the environment.

The polluted flax-dam where the frogs spawn, functions as an alternative centre of knowledge. The auditory and visual textures of the flax-dam register the dynamic, metamorphic, zoological process of a pubescent, deliquescent and putrefying nature felt on the boy's pulse within which deeper, more disturbing and more dangerous knowledges inhere. This is the domain of the unconscious made up by the somatic, the sublimated and the suppressed intimated at by the infiltration into the boy's consciousness by undefined powers emblematised by the flax-dam frogs. Grotesque emblems of patriarchal power, 'great slime kings', prognosticate 'vengeance' on the boy/poet who would dip his hand into the murky waters for frogspawn. The poem insinuates the presence beneath the ideological veneer of official societal discourse of a threatening sexual instinct, a Protestant masculine industrial and political violence and what Davis describes as a 'pullulation of alien secret, absorbing life'[16] which is suggestively Celtic and native in character. It is

at this level that Heaney is to interrogate his formative experience in order to apprehend the genealogy of culture.

'Death of a Naturalist' records very distinctly a call for the boy/poet to adventure beyond official societal knowledges, that which Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* represents as an 'opening of a destiny':[17] 'one hot day' the poet/boy harkens to 'a coarse croaking I had not heard before'. Heaney has spoken of poetry as a 'path' which can lead to 'some self-justification, some kind of verification',[18] and the path is by way of a poetry which mediates the literary and the illiterate. The practice of writing poetry itself is an alien act with which Heaney has come to terms. Even in the early years of writing at Queen's University, poetry appears as a strange medium with which the poet becomes increasingly familiar. In his lecture 'Learning from Eliot', Heaney recalls the daunting otherness attaching to T. S. Eliot's poetry: 'first encountered as a strange fact of culture, poetry is internalised over the years until...its strangeness, becomes in the end a familiar path within you'.[19] The humanist structures in which Heaney relocates himself provoke and mobilise displacement, by breaking down the forms of and relations to the originary place.

This is the issue which the late poem, 'Making Strange' in *Station Island*, deals with. In her cultural and etymological gloss on this key poem Barbara Hardy comments:

> Heaney borrows his title from what the Russian formalist Victor Schlovsky calls defamiliarisation or *ostranenie*. 'Making Strange' is a definition of the poetic process of enlarging and reshaping experience from known and familiar particulars.[20]

The derivation of 'making strange' is a formalist, academic one. It is a voice attributed to the poet as stranger, traveller and learned metropolitan man, 'the one with the travelled intelligence' who comes into contact with rural Mossbawn:

> I found myself driving the stranger
>
> through my country, adept
> at dialect, reciting my pride

> in all that I knew, that began to make strange
> at that same recitation.

Viewing and reviewing his originary culture from the detachment of the car, from behind windows, barred gates, the reconstructed detached poet is able to render an intimate's knowledge of his home ground. It is art made up of an expanding discovery of knowledges about the ordinary assimilated life, the familiar made strange. At the same time the travelled stranger returns Heaney's artistic and educational humanism to the technological, capitalist modernity for which the car is chief symbol. The poet's entrée into modern formations forms the more suppressed narrative strain in Heaney's poetry.

The Ministry of Fear

The long-term rise of an upwardly-mobile class of educated Northern Catholics, beneficiaries of the 1947 Education Act contributes importantly to the outbreak of Ulster Catholic dissent in the late 1960s.[21] David Cairns and Shaun Richards offer in *Writing Ireland* an account of the dynamics of Ulster society in the 1960s which explains the irreconcilable dilemma between political domination and economic and cultural innovation facing the dominant Protestant Unionist power:

> In the 1960s Unionism's basic need for discrimination in employment etc. to maintain itself as a cross-class sectarian alliance, conflicted with the need of economic development for an educated workforce.

A beneficiary himself of a liberal and liberalising education system, an *arriviste* professional teacher and writer in the 1960s, Heaney is located at the heart of this narrative of *emergence* of a dissenting marginal group challenging the *dominants* of Ulster political hegemony. Heaney has reflected that growing up in the North 'the emergent self grows carrying responsibility for the group'.[22] Participating in the Civil Rights marches of the late 1960s and after the October 1968 march in Derry, he wrote in *The Listener*: 'It seems now that the Catholic minority to retain any self-respect, will have to risk the charge of wrecking the new moderation and seek justice more vociferously'.[23]

The poet's earliest volumes display a distinct quietism on issues of British and Protestant oppression. Knowledges about sectarian factionalism are suppressed in *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the Dark*. 'My first attempts to speak, to make verse, faced the Northern sectarian problem. Then this went underground',[24] the poet informs us. Historical tensions tend to be sublimated into the imagery of a violent nature in these volumes, representing a muffling of social and linguistic politics by the more personalised anxious sense of rural life. In his chapter entitled 'The Tight Gag of Place: *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the Dark*', Morrison points to the potential source of censorship by picking out the tight-lipped docker whose 'Speech is clamped in the lip's vice' to 'stand as an epigraph for the early work, and its obsession with silence'[25] - a condition which is broken with in the wake of renewed sectarianism in 1969. *Wintering Out* (1972) and *North* (1975) represent Seamus Heaney's earliest and most demonstrative response to the renewed outbreak of sectarian and neo-colonial violence in Ulster and as such are comparable in temper and temporality to Brian Friel's dramas *The Freedom of the City* (1973) and *Volunteers* (1975).

It is at this point that the double man in possession of a *native* and an *educated* vision comes to the fore, bringing historical, mythical and intellectual understanding to bear upon the material and emotional textures of personal and social experience. His poetry mobilises a gender mythos of feminine and masculine to code the oppositions between the major cultural groups in Ireland which his essay '1972' describes as a mythologised encounter between masculine and feminine currents in culture. The Ulster speech idiom which titles 'The Other Side' proposes the mutual relations of *otherness* built into the linguistic, cultural and political structures of Ulster. The poem characterises difference in terms of a Protestant masculine/Catholic feminine opposition in the contiguous spheres of politics, culture, religion, speech and sensibility, a difference symbolised in the stream which marks the boundary of the respective farms. The consonantal plosive language, the

confidence of patriarchal biblical idiom uttered in the 'tongue of chosen people', the sweep of the blackthorn walking stick through peripheral weeds, the planter's 'pollen' drifting onto Heaney's farmland, illustrate the Protestant neighbour's masculine settler power which in other poems appears in political and institutional forms of dominance.

The major image of British-Protestant institutional control in *Wintering Out* and *North* is *the ministry of fear*, an ambiguous and ironic title arising out of Wordsworth's poetry[26] but more in keeping with an Orwellian view of the authoritarian state. Ulster shows up in Heaney's work as a society of surveillance in which state institutions function in the manner of Foucault's *panopticon.*[27] Tight scrutiny of the citizenry is backed up by procedures of discipline and punishment through official state apparatus. In its ideological form the panopticon takes on the condition of the disembodied eye of power that is internalised as a form of self-censoring super-ego, the institutional and ideological intent to construct, govern and regulate the limits of being, certain id, ego and libidinous impulses, within specific political, cultural and gender power-interests.

It is in his childhood in the farming country of mid-Ulster that Heaney regularly encountered the ministry of fear, manifest in the nexus of economic and militarist police regulation dramatised in 'A Constable Calls'(*N*). The implicit threat posed by the RUC officer who arrives at the Heaney household to register farm acreage and crop yields is conveyed through the descriptive poetic language of oppression attached to the policeman's bicycle, uniform and accoutrements: 'fat black handgrips', 'the boot of the law', the 'baton-case' and the compelling spectacle of the 'polished holster/ With its buttoned flap, the braid of cord/ Looped into the revolver butt'. The 'heavy ledger', he carries is also framed within the language of an overbearing and overweening state authority. Apart from its unprepossessing weight, Heaney attributes to it the portentous status of a 'domesday book', a colonial English image of official state documentation and inscription of

people and lands in the realm of Ulster. These are the instruments of discipline and control which organise law and transgression conjuring up in the young boy's imagination an iconography of threatened punishment: 'Imagining the black hole in the barracks'. The boy conceives fantasies of deprivation of physical freedom and of existential being, the black hole appears not only as part of a carceral network of punishment but also of an existential annihilation.

The process of registration and record of the RUC census is not dissimilar in its language and action to the process of inscription enacted by Captain Lancey in *Translations*, illustrating the historical sources and frameworks of an Ulster protestant hegemony. The units of measurement which encode the rural farm are empirical and Anglo-Saxon, 'tillage returns/ In acres, roods and perches'. The poem offers a sub-textual image of a British-Protestant authority inscribing the Catholic subject and the natural produce of the land within a colonialist language of law and measurement which is legal and economic in its overt expression but is political and existential in its underlying operation. The language vistas sustain the historically imposed empiricist, cartesian vision of the world. The sight of the policeman 'snapping the carrier spring/ Over the ledger' functions as a metaphor of Catholic entrapment, caught, so to speak, in the gin-trap of the Protestant state. The closing image of the policeman's 'bicycle ticked, ticked, ticked' is beguilingly ambivalent, representing the Newtonian regularity of a provincial form of law while also promising the future violent riposte to the agrarian oppression such principles minister.

The claustrophobic structure of Ulster Catholic feeling appears again in the administration of fear by the political and military operations as, for example, at an RUC roadblock where the adult poet is quizzed as to his identity while the militia point the 'muzzle of a sten gun in my eye'. In the much later poem, 'From the Frontier of Writing' in *The Haw Lantern* the poet speaks of the 'tightness and nilness round that space/ when the car stops in the road'. This constricting

discrimination also operates unequivocally in the sphere of culture where it is the ear which is assailed. In 'July'(*S*), Heaney remembers that 'my ear was winnowed annually' by the festive drumming of the Orange celebration of the Battle of the Boyne, on July 12th. 'Orange Drum, Tyrone, 1966'(*S*) also recalls an Orange drummer beating out a rebarbative message which is definitively anti-papist: 'His battered signature subscribes "No Pope"' which is sounded as a ritual fear-laden reminder of how a native Catholic power in Ulster has been eclipsed by a planter Protestant power.

The most notable poem in *Wintering Out* in charting the historical rise of Protestantism in Ulster is 'The Wool Trade' which is prefaced by Stephen Dedalus' reflection on linguistic dispossession and subjugation which illustrates Heaney's own Joycean impulse to ponder the status of the English-speaking Irishman. 'The Wool Trade' deals with the making and production of wool as both a history and a metaphor for the making and production of a Protestant hegemony. As Elmer Andrews attests, Heaney's poem places wool manufacture in the context of a 'highly generalised regime of [native Gaelic] dispossession'[28] which is economic, cultural and linguistic in form. Protestant settlement features in a colonial history in which a mercantilist economy replaces a parochial Gaelic way of life:

> And square set men in tunics
> Who plied soft names like Bruges
>
> In their talk, merchants
> Back from the Netherlands

The ethics of work and the networking of business through Protestant centres of commerce and trade index the destructive intervention of a Protestant political economy into Gaelic social, cultural and linguistic structures: 'the spools/ Of his vowels', 'a language of waterwheels/ A lost syntax of looms and spindles'. Heaney's poetry of the period is ensconced in a vision of language which Tom Paulin describes in the opening to his essay 'A New look at the Language Question':

> The history of a language is often a story of possession and dispossession, territorial struggle and the establishment or imposition of a culture.[29]

Rural and domestic processes of wool production, the language which encodes and authorises that environment are no more than a memory within the language which is 'Fading, in the gallery of the tongue'. Current linguistic utterance contains only residues of past Gaelic modes of speech and its commensurate modes of being. The speech of an alien culture, that of the colonial Protestant, referred to in 'their talk', has historically displaced the original language such that Heaney must acknowledge that his own language has become that of the planter: 'And I must talk tweed'.

Heaney takes this economic history of 'tweed' and puts it to work as a metaphor for the colonial violence which accesses and supports changes in the economic, cultural and linguistic environment. Gaelic wool is interwoven with alien cotton, a cloth marked with 'flecks of blood', the stains of a political violence which has wrought a new sensibility in the environment. The settler's material is 'stiff' as compared with the softness of the wool associated with Gaelic structures of feeling and speech. Clothing materials symbolise the contrast between 'the easy going warmth' of the Gaelic community and the stiff reserve of the Protestant sensibility.

'The Wool Trade' illustrates how the economic ground is refashioned by a Protestant form of mindedness, constituting a pressure exerted in the name of specific existential as well as economic interests. Max Weber's reading of history in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* accepts that social environments are made by flows of minded-activity whose subjective springs are within cultural and ethnic groups offering a virtual phylogenetic theory of the sources of external social systems.[30] Change in the economic sphere of the kind dramatised in Friel's *Translations* and Heaney's 'The Wool Trade' re-orders and re-orientates the linguistic and cultural environment biased towards specific English, Scots Protestant social, cultural and spiritual identities, bearing and conveying the meanings they

attach to existence and contending with other versions of being, in this instance Gaelic and Catholic.

The Textual Politics of Post-Colonialism

The masculine order of an historical English colonial linguistic and cultural hegemony is distinctly different in character to that of Ulster Protestantism. Constituted by a political/sexual metaphor of an imperial English male conquest over a female Ireland issuing from an Elizabethan and Renaissance aristocracy and gentry, Ralegh's male rape of the Irish maiden in 'Ocean's Love to Ireland'(*N*) personifies English dominion over the feminine land and people of Ireland which is extrapolated into the linguistic and literary conquest of the nation. Ralegh's 'broad Devonshire' overpowers the 'ruined maid' who 'complains in Irish', while 'iambic drums/ of English beat the woods where her poets/ Sunk like Onan'. 'Traditions'(*WO*), too, begins with a sexual image of English linguistic penetration of Irish speech: Ireland's native language and literary tradition are personified by a Gaelic female muse, 'Our guttural muse', while the verb 'was bulled long ago' imagines England as a bovine masculine force. The poem utilises an imagery of aristocratic male dominion by way of Heaney's adaptation of a speech from *Othello* to illustrate colonial customisation of Ireland by a usurping English linguistic and literary tradition, of which Shakespeare is the most notable representative:

> ...custom 'that most
> sovereign mistress'
> beds us down
> in the British Isles.

Heaney mockingly celebrates the success of that conquest: 'We are to be proud of our Elizabethan English', some 'cherished archaisms/ are correct Shakespearian'.

'The Ministry of Fear'(*N*) displays a literary knowledge of the poet's historical language inheritance, illustrating the way in which it is troublingly embedded in a matrix of class, culture and nationhood in which English, Ulster Protestant and Ulster Catholic speech constitute a descending hierarchy of esteem

and value. The poet contrasts the cultivated speech of middle-class English culture with the 'ill-bred' rural Catholic of Ulster, speaking, from the perspective of the cultural centre, in a relatively unrefined and vulgar manner:

> Those hobnailed boots from beyond the mountain
> Were walking, by God, all over the fine
> Lawns of elocution.
> Have our accents
> Changed? 'Catholics, in general, don't speak
> As well as students from the Protestant schools.'
> Remember that stuff? Inferiority
> Complexes, stuff that dreams were made on.

The ideological construction of regional, class and religious relationships between English Home Counties civility and Ulster-Irish Catholic vulgarity are fixed in speech and cultural discourse. As Colin MacCabe argues in 'Language, Literature, Identity', in Britain, 'regional variation' is 'in itself class marked'.[31] The Ulster dialect represents a class and regional subordination to a middle class English hegemony which privileges Standard English and Received Pronunciation. The poet plays with carnival relish the post-colonial role of the unruly Ulster barbarian trespassing on the linguistic and literary terrain of the 'cultivated' English centre.

In a highly self-conscious and programmatic way 'Traditions' concentrates upon the reformations in literary and linguistic traditions within Irish culture brought about by English colonialism. Exhibiting similar interests to those of Friel in *Making History*, the poem is concerned with the production of colonial hegemony - the process by which the dominant political formation acts within the domain of culture to describe and inscribe the colonised within discourse as subordinate citizens. The emblematic wild geese and the stage Irishman figure of MacMorris depicted in the poem as 'gallivanting/ round the Globe', are taken from Shakespeare's *Henry V* to exemplify the problematised position of the colonised Irish within English discourse. In *The Irish Novelists 1800-1850*, Tom Flanagan, to whom 'Traditions' is dedicated, calls MacMorris 'the first stage-Irishman'.[32] An Irish military captain in *Henry V*, he appears as a satirised pugnacious and aggressive man with a deviant form of speech which Cairns and Richards assert

defines him as 'a comical second order citizen'.[33] MacMorris is the generic form of the figure whom Friel recasts in his dramas *Volunteers* and *The Freedom of the City* in the dispossessed but devilishly witty and insightful protagonists, Keeney and Skinner, who challenge the complacencies of the old imperial cultural centres.

As parties to the same historical action, Heaney links Edmund Spenser to Shakespeare by citing Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* so that MacMorris is imagined to have heard tell of the Irish 'as going very bare/ of learning as wild hares,/ as anatomies of death'. Spenser's categorisation of the Irish as unlearned, unruly and uncivilised is also illustrated in 'Bog Oak' where the poet appears as the imperial stranger in the Irish landscape witnessing what he deems Irish barbarism and buffoonery. Placing Spenser and Shakespeare in a common context, Cairns and Richards exemplify in *Writing Ireland* how Shakespeare's History Plays are illustrative of the way in which the work of Renaissance writers engage 'with the process of colonial discourse at the moment of its mobilisation to deal with Ireland'.[34] The Elizabethan English versions of Irishry which came to establish themselves as traditions within English cultural production illustrate the manner in which 'groups of texts, types of texts...acquire mass, density and referential power among themselves and therefore the culture at large'.[35]

The indignant question which MacMorris addresses to the Welsh captain Fluellen in *Henry V*, 'What ish my nation?', is recycled by Heaney as an anxious query about the national denomination of MacMorris's and his own homeland of Ireland. The dominant note of cultural superiority in English literary tradition is countered in 'Traditions' through the persona of Leopold Bloom, the chief protagonist of Joyce's *Ulysses*, who 'so much later...replied "Ireland"'. Joyce's writing emerges out of a period of intense cultural production around the issue of Irish independence and features in a counter-hegemony which opposes both English colonialism and Irish nationalism. In the 'Cyclops' episode of *Ulysses*, the Jewish Bloom defends himself against an anti-semitic Irish nationalist by insisting that

Ireland is his nation because he was born there. Bloom's name is a play on Slieve Bloom, the small chain of mountains sited in the navel or centre of Ireland. The connotation resounds with Heaney's own pagan image of the umbilical *omphalos* which anchors the poet to Mossbawn.

Heaney's writing arises out of a subsequent period of intense cultural production around the issue of British claims upon Northern Ireland during the late nineteen sixties and seventies. In 'Traditions', he mobilises Joyce/Bloom to dramatise his own refutation of British political inclusiveness: to be born in Ireland is to be Irish, not British. By re-reading tradition Heaney is definable as a post-colonialist writer, a poet asserting an Irish literary tradition distinct from, and to some extent in opposition to, that of English literary practice. Its objective to discern and take issue with *historical forms of political, linguistic and cultural* dispossession. Yet, contradictorily, Heaney is indebted to the canon which framed and fashioned his cultural formation, his education and his writings. Even as he takes issue with the English tradition, the Ulster poet places value upon the same texts as the English centres of cultural power. Oxford was later to embrace Heaney, a recognition of the deterministic and seductive powers of a long-term historical imperialism.

At Work In The Lost Fields of Language

The poems which deal expressly with displacement from the rural, linguistic and cultural ground of Gaelic society in *Wintering Out*, 'Gifts of Rain', 'Traditions', 'The Backward Look', do so in mythic, symbolic and deconstructive modes. Inundation of the Gaelic civilisation by a colonial English culture is represented in 'Gifts of Rain' by the apocalyptic image of the flood. The surging river of an insurgent colonialism initiates an 'uprooting' which terminates in the submersion of the cultural landscape: 'lost fields' which allegorically feature as the vanished site of Gaelic culture. The Irish fieldworker 'hooped to where he planted'

displays the connectiveness which links the rural Irish to the land as a site of lost culture. The 'phantom ground' of Gaelic culture which 'Land' presents also portrays the poet stepping out agrarian fields, recomposing rural and discursive ownership: 'I composed habits for those acres'.

Heaney's frequent reference to the *field* as a metaphor for the cultural condition of a larger Ireland is a trope which appears in the literary consciousness of a number of Heaney's contemporaries, as in John B. Keane's play, *The Field*, or John Montague's *The Rough Field* which as the English translation of Garvaghey or *garbh achaidh* stands for the translation of an Irish cultural tradition: 'Rough Field in the Gaelic and rightly named/ As setting for a mode of life that passes on:/ Harsh landscape that haunts me'. Foucault explains that his own use of the term 'field' is an attempt to capture the relations of power and knowledge that take place within language 'in order to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory'.[36] Foucault wishes to plot the way in which fields of discourse inscribe and monitor fields of power which overlay the geographical terrain. In presenting the writer in *Wintering Out* as fieldworker at large in the fields of language, Heaney employs a self-reflexive image of the poet which fits in easily with Foucault's notion of the writer/speaker as a language and cultural labourer in the fields of discourse. Heaney concludes the symbolic narrative of Gaelic linguistic decline in 'A Backward Look' by using a seasonal and agricultural metaphor of the harvested autumnal field to represent the traces of a disappeared Gaelic tongue and a declined Irish peasantry:

> gleanings and leavings
> in the combs
> of a fieldworker's archive.

The persona of the fieldworker merges the native and the educated man to construct a picture of the poet as a literary archivist surveying the rural heritage of the *'fieldworker's archive'*. Heaney's appearance in the early poetry of *Wintering Out* is that of a cultural anthropologist carrying out a field study upon his own childhood

and his culture's historical life in the rural fields of Ireland - drawing upon and translating the rural archive through the literary operation into the cultural forms of the metropolitan archive which Foucault analyses in 'The Historical Apriori and the Archive'.[37]

The poem 'Fodder' which begins the volume presents a double image of Heaney, as a boy working on the stack of hay to bed the stalls and as a self-conscious image of the poet working in language upon the stack of his parochial rural culture: the boy/poet's removal of the 'weathered eaves' a preliminary to easing from 'the tight/ vise of a stack' a poetic language which authors the rural experience of himself and his people. The 'trail' of fodder 'broken from haggard to stable' in 'Servant Boy', the soft ruts of the cart track in 'Bog Oak', the 'dark track' of the 'line of mummers' taking a 'dewy path' in 'The Last Mummer', are signs which represent the historical deposits in land, language and landscape of an Irish rural way of life while also figuring as a memory trace of that culture now deposited in the linguistic signs of Heaney's text.

The Magical World-View

Heaney has remarked that 'the material that was my imaginative possession - the rural outback, Irish history, my anxiety was that it might be insignificant'.[38] Experiencing an intensified feeling of displacement from place, what is witnessed in the poet's labour upon his rural place in *Wintering Out* is how *fother* ('Fodder'), 'last summer's tumbled/ swathes of grass/ and meadowsweet', provides an imagery of an imaginative *protein* which can configure a cultural and artistic politics of place. The literate poet deposits in his poetry signs of his folkloric heritage in order to counter as he sees it the adverse political and modernistic conditions in Ulster emblematised by the severe wintry conditions in the volume. The erosion of an Irish pagan and folk life by the processes of modernity which *Dancing at Lughnasa* represents in the Marconi radio finds its equivalent in 'The Last Mummer' in the

TV media: 'The luminous screen in the corner/ has them charmed in a ring'. Like Friel's dramas *Faith Healer* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Wintering Out* specifically addresses the Weberian and Foucauldian sense of a history in western culture in which a demagicking or desanctification of the world has been taking place which, in the context of Ireland, refers to a colonialism and materialism that has been breaking down for several centuries a ritual religious life and a magical world-view.

Deane has called Heaney an inheritor in that his own poetic gifts share the same fascinating, magical manifestation and transformations as his gifted folkloric predecessors.[39] Just as *Dancing at Lughnasa* professes to show the playwright's own vestigial experience of folk rite and belief in the Ireland of the 1930s so Heaney's poetry of *Wintering Out* draws upon his boyhood experience of rural Ireland in the 1940s. Heaney's essay 'A Sense of Place' tells of how in his childhood he experienced a sacral world which still retained 'some vestigial sense of place as it was experienced in the older dispensation'. He goes on to recall a totemistic, hieratic and magical landscape 'instinct with signs' of folkloric belief: the healing powers of rainwater, the tabooed sacral tree, Brigid Crosses, May flowers, the harvest bow, hallowe'en masks, all the 'foundation' for a magic view of the world, a foundation that 'sustained a diminished structure of lore and superstition and half-pagan, half-Christian thought and practice'.[40]

The hieratic poet appears in 'Thatcher' in *Door into the Dark* where Heaney is attributed the 'Midas touch' of the thatcher who can transform 'straw' into 'gold'. In 'The Last Mummer'(*WO*) the poet dons the 'fabulous' straw mask of the mummer and ministers a ritual mythopoeic grace to his own community: 'The moon's host elevated/ in a monstrance of holly trees'. The notion of the moon as a Christian host being delivered from the chalice of pagan nature offers up an image of the folkloric life as a source of sustenance, an attempt by the modern poet consciously to sustain the mythical and pagan dimensions within Irish culture. The magical nourishing folk and Catholic perception of the outhouse in 'Fodder'

appears, too, in the Edenic pristine beauty of 'Anahorish', 'where springs washed into/ the shiny grass', in the mythical Gaelic description of the snipe in 'The Backward Look' as '*little goat of the air,/ of the evening,/ little goat of the frost*', the sedge-warbler, the Irish Nightingale, singing in the night in 'Serenades', a goat with cold horns/ pluming into the moon in 'Fireside' and the magical outpourings of both nature and the culture's musicality celebrated in 'A New Song' and 'Gifts of Rain'.

In a more ritual mode, the volume also deals with the festivities of the pagan and folk year: the Yuletide folk-custom which attaches to both servant boy ('Servant Boy') who come first-footing over the threshold of a wintry new year; the festive drama of the folk-mummers; the corn dolly of 'Land' wrought as a female fertility offering to the spirit of the corn, 'a woman of old wet leaves/ rush-bands and thatcher's scollops,/ stooked loosely, her breasts and open-work/ of new straw and harvest bows'; the Brigid's Cross of 'Traditions' which celebrates the spring feast day of Imbolg and St Brigid; the darker festivities of the pre-Christian Samhain festival of Hallowe'en recorded in 'No Sanctuary' and the archaic fertility sacrifices of 'The Tollund Man' and 'Nerthus'. In 'Cairn Making' the primitive ritual of cairn-making brings the poet into the strange contact with the numinous ancestral ground of the Burren, County Clare: 'he tells with almost fear/...of strange affiliation/ To what was touched and handled there'. A correspondence is made with his own makings in poetry of a vestigial preternatural presence characterised as an 'aftermath', the residual growth after harvesting which is the protein of the past that Heaney deposits in his textual archive.

A cautionary note may be sounded here, however, about the discursive occasion of Heaney's project. Raymond Williams notes the impact of nineteenth-century Romanticism which, emphasising native and traditional cultures, led to the 'new concept of folk-culture' as opposed to the 'MECHANICAL character of the new civilisation then emergent'.[41] The long-term categorisation and classification

of the rural, the folk, the Celt within the order of discourse puts Heaney in an ambiguous relationship with the dominant culture archive. Both native and archivist, Heaney has the potential to be at once the *other* and the appropriator of his cultural order unwittingly risking becoming a type of the go-between which defines Owen in *Translations*.

James F. Knapp's attempt to get at the ambiguity of J.M Synge's relations to dominant culture can be instructive here. Synge, according to Knapp, responded to the pressures of an urbanising modernity 'by celebrating cultural patterns which that society was rapidly destroying throughout the world'.[42] Synge's presentation in drama to a cultured, English-speaking and international audience raises the question in Knapp's mind as to whether his fiction was a significant critique of the oppressions of modern industrial, imperial society or in reality was an 'obfuscating fiction that only seemed to challenge the reigning ideology of its time, while in reality reinforcing the imaginative structures of that ideology'.[43] The issue arising for Heaney is to what degree is his fiction critically intrusive into ideologies which govern and structure Ulster as an oppressive political, cultural and linguistic ground, and to what extent does it nourish the imaginative structures of a British and English cultural hegemony?

Dinnseanchas: In The Archives of Grammar and Pronunciation

Heaney also discovers deposits in language and place-name which can recuperate an experience of place which is native and indigenous but which also honours a planter history of Ulster. Blake Morrison has said that Heaney is a *fieldworker* 'in the archives of grammar and pronunciation'[44] and that the study of his local townlands represents a reworking of the deposits of Gaelic, Scots Planter and English etymologies, dialect and orality laid down historically in the cultural archives.

Estyn Evans in *Irish Folk Ways* presents the townland as a unit of cultural geography deeply embedded in the Irish psyche.[45] But as *Faith Healer* announces each townland place-name bears the mark of a disintegrated past, each a sign of the colonial usurpation of an antecedent culture. 'The Stations of The West' in Heaney's *Stations* records Gaelic place-name as verbal matter strange yet familiar to the mouth and the ear of the anglicised Irishman who on a visit to the Gaeltacht in the West of Ireland feels 'homesick for a speech I was to extirpate'. The poet uprooted from the language departs from the locale with a store of Gaelic words: 'Rannfast and Errigal, Annaghry and Kincasslagh: names portable as altar stones, unleavened elements', sounds with which the *dinnseanchas* poems of *Wintering Out* resonate. Seamus Deane describes the 'empty cavity between a language lost (Gaelic) and a language gained (English)' as 'a space that has obvious fascination for the writer'.[46] Heaney's interest in Mossbawn is indicative of a broader concern in contemporary Irish literature with the ambiguous heritage of the native townland.

In his essay 'Sense of Place', Heaney defines the Gaelic tradition of *dinnseanchas* poems which sanctions his own writing about a fractured linguistic and territorial inheritance:

> ...in Irish writing there is a whole genre of writing called *dinnseanchas*, poems and tales which relate the original meanings of place names and constitute a form of mythological etymology.[47]

The phonetics and etymology of the place-names of local mid-Ulster townlands are embodied in the musical and linguistic prospects of *Anahorish , Broagh*, *Toome, Moyola* and *Derrygarve* which open up to view vistas of the imaginative, mythopoeic relationship of Irish speaker to Irish place and language. 'Anahorish', the townland where Heaney went to primary school, takes the etymology of the place-name, *anach fhior uisce*, the 'place of clear water', and through its verbal enunciation summons to personal and collective memory a mythic relation to place. The poem offers an image of the writer negotiating an oral and pastoral relationship to locale in which topography, language and self syncretise, a condition which the

poet seeks to poetically recuperate: *'Anahorish*, soft-gradient/ of consonant, vowel-meadow'.

'Toome' and 'Broagh' extend the Ulster terrain which Heaney maps within his literary *dinnseanchas*. Toome possesses a powerful paradigmatic core of reference to the ancient and buried past which emerges most explicitly in the image of the 'souterrain'. Toome is a townland which neighbours Mossbawn, 'a place-name derived from the Irish word *taim*, a burial mound',[48] a close approximation phonetically and semantically to the English word *tomb* signifying a subterranean burial vault. The unfolding utterance of the syllables of Toome, the softly explosive dental 't' breaking into the extended vowel, acts as an intimately connected literal and metaphorical process of excavation to recover the store of meaning compacted historically in the word: 'My mouth holds round/ the soft blastings,/ *Toome*, *Toome*,/ as under the dislodged/ slab of the tongue/ I push into souterrain/ prospecting what new/ in a hundred centuries'. The dislodged slab of the tongue which occurs in completing the enunciation of the word enacts the process of opening up the souterrain, 'the underground chamber or storehouse, of linguistic memory'.[49]

The 'soft blastings' of tongue uncover and name 'loam, flints, musket-balls,/ fragmented ware,/ torcs and fish-bones'. The flints and musket-balls are explained by Neil Corcoran: 'Toome was one of the sites of the 1798 rebellion, and hence the military remains'.[50] The other deposits represent evidence of prehistoric Celtic or Mesolithic settlement in the Bann valley which Heaney notes as one of the oldest inhabited areas in the country.[51] The deposits of history are housed connotatively within the souterrain of language indicating the manner in which words as symptoms of human history, memory and attachments signify as emblems of national consciousness, Irish and Celtic. The land is semantically covered in a Gaelic transliteration which registers an Irish native historical experience and Heaney's *dinnseanchas* reinstates and releases in literary text its sublimated power.

Similarly, 'Broagh' announces an elementary relation to the Irish earth, the 'name of a townland where one half of our farm was situated...the Irish word *Bruach*, the bank, the bank of the river Moyola, which bordered the farm'.[52] 'Broagh', as well as riverbank, is also the Irish-Gaelic word for Irish accent or dialect, and a Gaelic homophone for shoe - the anglicised 'brogue' derives from the Gaelic word *bróg*. Heaney exploits the multiple signification of the word to assert an autocthonous Irish language-landscape relationship against colonial possession of the Ulster province. The imprint upon the soil of Ireland by the vocalic Gaelic-Irish brogue is emblematically signalled by the heelmark of the brogue shoe on the dark earth: 'the shower/ gathering in your heelmark/ was the black o/ in *Broagh*'. The language of the poem covers the field of the page as a space equivalent to the vernacular mapping of the Ulster landscape: 'BROAGH/ Riverbank, the long rigs/ ending in broad docken/ and a canopied pad/ down to the ford'. Tom Paulin glosses the relations between Heaney's language, local Ulster geography and linguistic etymology:

> So you've got the Gaelic place-name *Broagh*, you've got the word *rigs* from Scots, you've got, as Heaney himself has pointed out about the poem, the word *docken*, meaning the dock plant which, as Heaney has said, is the Old English plural such as you get for shoes, *shooen*. So you've got an inclusive kind of language.[53]

The linguistic etymology of 'Broagh' stakes a native Irish and planter claim to the land in the political ownership of the British: 'that last/ *gh* that the strangers found/ difficult to manage' represents the political exclusivity of the Ulster dialect and lexicon:

> I realised Broagh was a sound native to Ireland, common to Unionist and Nationalist, but unavailable to an English person, who could not quite manage the sound represented by *gh*...[54]

Paulin notes that the close of the poem picks up on the old Irish nationalist idea of the British in Ireland as the stranger in the house, but that it does not exclude, as traditional Irish nationalism has done, the Protestant people or the Unionist people

of the North of Ireland, though of course it is written against a Unionist ideology, the notion of Ulster being British.

Tribal Airs: An Erotic Mouth-Music

The textual processing of the Irish terrain and place-name acknowledges very much like Friel's work the colonial process of *writing Ireland.* Friel and Heaney assimilated much later into that culture of education and print exploit these mechanisms to *rewrite Ireland* against the colonial imprint and reinstate something of the power of a cultural orality. But the counter-cultural impulse of text is not in itself fully adequate to account for Heaney's linguistic and textual practice in *Wintering Out.* Heaney takes Deane's poststructuralist logic into more difficult areas of social discourse, the cultural splits in language generate a poetic in which language is conceived not only as a condition of the cerebral, the cultural and the textual but also as a condition of the visceral, the racial and the vocal. It is a view which tends to deconstruct the *literate* oppositions of nature and culture by returning the production of meaning to the *illiterate* site of the human and racial body. The implication is that meaning is not only a semantic construct of language but is also sourced in the body and issues from the body in the tones, textures and registers of voice, speech and musicality.

The marking of the Irish landscape with the language and dialect of a musical Gaelic orality is elaborated in 'Broagh' by the assignation of the Broagh vocable as a 'low tattoo/ among the windy boortrees/ and rhubarb-blades', a landscape indelibly marked with the pigments of Irish speech and native musicality. Tom Paulin notes the pattern of vocal and musical sounds in the poem, hearing deep down a tatoo of the native folk bodhrans drummimg 'a kind of tribal music coming through the mid-Ulster accent',[55] a native resistance to the iambic drum of English and the Lambeg drum of Ulster Protestantism.

Heaney's early poetry employs the standard quatrain structure and iambic pentameter line of the English lyric which 'Ocean's Love to Ireland' deems the characteristic metre of a high English culture which imposed its linguistic and cultural sensibility upon Ireland: 'Iambic drums/ Of English beat the woods where her poets/ Sink like Onan'. In *Poetry as Discourse* Anthony Easthope argues that iambic pentameter is a 'specific cultural phenomenon, a discursive form'[56] which emerges in English verse in the Middle Ages within the context of a courtly culture - arguing that the metrical pattern subsequently embeds itself in an English masculine bourgeois culture. Easthope claims that the pentameter organises a subject position and regulates the sensibility citing Coleridge's view that metre has 'great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion'.[57] The Ulster Catholic native matrix of being and its vocalisation as a 'low tattoo' suggests how a specific sensibility has been historically suppressed by the acoustics of English and Scots Protestantism coded in the iambic drum of England and the Lambeg drum of the Ulster Protestant.

In 'Orange Drum, Tyrone 1966', the Catholic Heaney interprets the Orange drums soundings as *'The air is pounding like a stethoscope'. Stethoscope is a* telling image, not only to sign the overt pounding of the drum but as an instrument for tuning in to the sounds of the body. It suggests the matrix of a highly masculinised sound issuing out of the Scots Planter racial and cultural body and offers a diagnosis of the sensory levels at which sectarian antagonism is produced. In 'July'(*S*) Heaney reports that the annual July marches represented a ritual excoriation of his own more feminine, auditory, Catholic sensibility which he collates with a feminine ruralism 'so my ear was winnowed annually'. Heaney is arguing that the sense of place and displacement is not only an issue of political and territorial dispossession, but is also about the interference with and suppression of an acoustics built into and expressed out of the racial or cultural body, a block,

which in the poems of colonial intrusion which close Part One of *North*, is seen as introducing a pathological political neurosis into the native culture.

Neil Corcoran notes the preponderance of a self-consciously evoked imagery in *Wintering Out* of the poet's ear listening in for his diminished racial and linguistic inheritance: the child/ poet in the trunk of the willow tree scanning the locale for its characteristic sounds; 'small mouth and ear/ in a woody cleft;/ lobe and larynx/ of the mossy places' ('Oracle'); the agrarian/ adult poet 'with my ear/ in this loop of silence/...I expect to pick up/ a small drumming' ('Land'). 'Soundings', the chief term of 'Gifts of Rain', has built into its semantic core the idea of the 'auditory imagination' (T. S. Eliot's term) as a depth-sounder, a radar for the immanent and the sublimated in locale: 'I cock my ear/ at an absence'. The poem begins with a listening in to an acoustics of Gaelic place configured as a Wordsworthian wise passiveness: 'Still mammal,/ straw-footed on the mud/ he begins to sense weather/ by his skin'. The stirrings of musical, natural and speech sounds in the landscape promote the notion of a poetic raid on the inarticulate within the noise-matrix of speech, the poet's feel for the rhythms, tones, syllabic forms and pace built into the syntax of a locality and a people. Heaney's disturbance of the Gaelic language sediment beneath the English colonial flood is encoded within a discourse of race and culture, the 'flower of mud-/ water blooms up to his reflection/ like a cut swaying/ its red spoors through a basin'; the disturbed mud a trail linking him to the alluvium of racial and cultural identity.

Heaney proceeds to draw up a racial and cultural acoustics of Gaelic place imagining an historical Mossbawn populated by an oral Gaelic-speaking peasantry confabulating in a visceral parlance, ears insidiously attuned to the lyrical feminine airs of the rains and river streaming through the locale:

> Their world-schooled ear
>
> could monitor the usual
> confabulations,the race
> slabbering past the gable

the Moyola harping on

its gravel beds:
all spouts by daylight
brimmed with their own airs
and overflowed each barrel

in long tresses.

The poet cocks his ear to the racial and linguistic absence: 'in the shared calling of blood/ arrives my need/ for antediluvian lore'. In the eloquence of *Moyola* as Gaelic word and as river, the poet savours the vocalic and guttural musicality of a Gaelic racial and cultural frequency: 'The tawny guttural water/ spells itself: Moyola/ is its own score and concert,/ bedding the locale/ in the utterance'. As syllabic vocable, sibilant river and sybaritic music the Moyola pipes tribal airs through the mid-Ulster landscape.

Heaney discovers at the roots of his poetic voice a 'river streaming hypnotically in the background, a stilled listener hovering between waking and dreaming'.[58] It represents the pre-verbal and illiterate matrix of sound, feeling and experience of a Gaelic feminine sensibility of language and landscape: 'A swollen river,/ A mating call of sound/ rises to pleasure me'. In 'A New Song', Derrygarve, an English transliteration of *doire gairbh* meaning *rough oak grove*, becomes a feminised vocal and topographical zone of erogenous intensity where desire for social being and belonging is played out by the poet. The evocative timbre of the vocable infiltrates the inner sensibility of the poet with the force of a pungent sexual aroma, 'And the name, a lost potent musk', arousing a sensual pleasure and delight for the personally remembered Derrygarve landscape. The resonance of a deeply-laid musicality configures a form of Lacanian or Kristevan pre-Oedipal Imaginary space in which the subject experiences a symphonic unity with the maternally demarcated world. Emphasising the sensuality and orality of the language, Heaney has described the *dinnseanchas* poems as 'erotic mouth-music' which releases sublimated feelings of belonging and possession. Heaney's poem suggests that the sensibility he is invoking springs from maternal centres of

racial and personal being located in place. Heaney's symbolism suggests culture and home are mutual maternal sites of identity formation and repressed desire, a formative pre-Oedipal environment where the 'ethnic' sensibility is imbibed and mediated.[59]

The Politics of Language: My Deep Design To Be At Home

As Riordan denotes in 'Eros and History', processes of colonisation and dispossession politicise the libido, 'eroticism becomes politicised in modern Irish poetry'.[60] The feelings of pleasure aroused by the interpellation of the personal self within the feminine language and landscape of Derrygarve becomes a stimulus for a political expression of a female Irish vocalic repossession of the ground staked out in masculine English consonants:

> 'But now our river tongues must rise
> From licking deep in native haunts
> To flood, with vowelling embrace,
> Demesnes staked out in consonants.'

'Demesne' is an image of the landscape as the site of an Anglo-Irish Ascendancy colonial political and linguistic occupation of the territory. The 'river tongues' is a synthesis of the sybaritic sounds of Ulster speech, an erotic, vocalic Irish matrix of sound in competition with the more substantive masculine consonants of English. 'Linen Town' pays respects to the spirit of Protestant nationalism represented by the Presbyterian cotton manufacturer and executed leader of the United Irishmen in Antrim, Henry Joy McCracken, 'a swinging tongue' on the gallows. He is a sign of a current of Protestant political action kept alive within language. In the cultural and linguistic marks on terrain, the Planter settlements of Castledawson and Upperlands, and the Gaelic vocables, 'bullaun' and 'rath', signs of ancient Celtic settlement, the poet asserts the rights of native Ulster Catholic and Scots Planter to an Irish terrain which excludes Britishness. Vowel and consonant are not only symbolic, mythical terms in a contemporary textual politics but illiterate vocal

sounds representative of feminised and masculinised, ethnic and racial sensibilities, in the Ulster province.

The form and shape of the poems in *Wintering Out* represent the angry post-colonial literary impulse which Heaney speaks to in 'Ministry of Fear','Ulster was British, but with no rights on/ The English lyric'. Of 'Broagh', in particular, Heaney has said it is:

> ...a piece of verse which represented a turn of the tide. I felt that I had made Broagh exclusive, made the English language work to tell my story.[61]

The *dinnseanchas* represent a shift in the English lyric form towards an Irish tradition of nature and landscape poetry which is capable of dealing with forays into psychic and mythic space which the Irish ground and sensibility represents. *Wintering Out* and *North* witness a poetry 'compressed, mostly two-stress lines, unrhymed, arranged in slender quatrains, and having an extremely narrow appearance on the page'.[62] These are the narrow *dinnseanchas* stakes which Heaney drives into the Irish ground: 'the ground possessed and repossessed'. 'Open Letter' (1983) succinctly articulates this political and linguistic bearing of the poetic project:

> My *patria*, my deep design
> To be at home
> In my own place and dwell within
> The proper name.

Heaney's recreation of his own childhood dwelling-places within mythological vistas of the world represents a Utopian desire to reinvest place through poetic discourse with sacral, mythical resonance. Heaney desires to return the home ground to what Foucault calls in 'Of Other Spaces' a site of political, cultural, linguistic *emplacement* which can accommodate his specific racial, cultural sensibility rather than the *displacement* he currently experiences.[63]

1. Seamus Heaney, 'Mossbawn', in *Preoccupations*, pp.17-27 (p.17).

2. 'Mossbawn', pp.20-1.

3. Raymond Williams, *The English Novel From Dickens to Lawrence*, p.95.

4. Raymond Williams, p.11.

5. Raymond Williams, p.99.

6. Tom Adair, 'Calling the Tune', *Linen Hall Review*, 6 (1989), 5-8 (p.7).

7. Alan Robinson, 'Seamus Heaney: the Free State of Image and Allusion', in *Instabilities in Contemporary British Poetry*, pp.123-60 (p.127).

8. Seamus Heaney, 'Poet, pilgrim, fugitive...', *The Times*, 11 Oct 1984, p.8.

9. Seamus Heaney, 'Feeling into Words', *Preoccupations*, pp.41-60 (p.41).

10. Neil Corcoran, *Seamus Heaney*, p.19.

11. John Wilson Foster, 'The Poetry of Seamus Heaney', in *Colonial Consequences*, pp.81-96 (p.83).

12. 'Belfast', p.35.

13. Seamus Heaney, 'The Sense of Place', *Preoccupations*, pp.131-49 (p.131).

14. John Haffenden, 'Meeting Seamus Heaney', in *Viewpoints: Poets in Conversation*, pp.57-75 (p.67).

15. See David Annwn's reading of the poem in *Inhabited Voices: Myth and History in the Poetry of Geoffrey Hill, Seamus Heaney and George Mackay Brown*, p.89.

16. Dick Davis, 'Door into the Dark', in *The Art of Seamus Heaney*, pp.29-34 (p.30).

17. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, p.51.

18. 'Poet, Pilgrim, Fugitive...', p.8.

19. Seamus Heaney, 'Learning from Eliot', *Agenda*, 27 (1989), 17-31 (p.19).

20. Barbara Hardy, 'Meeting the Myth: *Station Island*', in *The Art of Seamus Heaney*, pp.151-63 (p.152).

21. Raymond William's paradigms of the historical in *Marxism and Literature*, residual, dominant and emergent, provide a means of apprehending cultural processes at work in the matrix of society during periods of dynamic change, and are very capable of linking *education* and *literature* to the *political*.

22. 'Poet, Pilgrim, Fugitive...', p.8.

23. Seamus Heaney, 'Old Derry's Walls', *Listener*, 80 (1968), 521-22 (p.522).

24. John Haffenden, p.63.

25. Blake Morrison, *Seamus Heaney*, p.20.

26. In Act II, l.619 of William Wordsworth's *The Borderers*, Oswald registers 'The wholesome ministry of fear and evil.'

27. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment.*

28. Elmer Andrews, *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: All The Realms of Whisper*, p.59.

29. Tom Paulin, 'A New Look At The Language Question' in *Ireland's Field Day*, pp.3-17 (p.3).

30. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Work-Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*

31. Colin McCabe, 'Language, Literature, Identity: Reflections on the Cox Report', *Critical Quarterly*, 32 (1990), 7-13 (p.8).

32. Tom Flanagan, *The Irish Novelists 1800-1850*, p.29.

33. David Cairns and Sean Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, p.10.

34. Cairns and Richards, p.12.

35. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.20.

36. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 1 (1986), 22-27 (p.69).

37. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Language.*

38. Frank Kinahan, 'An Interview with Seamus Heaney', *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1982), 405-14 (p.410).

39. Seamus Deane, 'Seamus Heaney: The Timorous and the Bold', in *Celtic Revivals*, pp.174-86 (p.177).

40. 'The Sense of Place', pp.132-33.

41. Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, p.79.

42. James F. Knapp, 'Primitivism and Empire in John Synge and Paul Gaugin', *Comparative Literature*, 41 (1989), 53-69 (p.58).

43. James F. Knapp, p.58.

44. Blake Morrison, p.40.

45. Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways.*

46. Seamus Deane, *The Guardian*, 12 December 1991, p.23.

47. 'The Sense of Place', p.131.

48. David Annwn, p.110.

49. Thomas C. Foster, *Seamus Heaney*, p.37.

50. Neil Corcoran, *Seamus Heaney*, p.88.

51. 'Belfast', p.35.

52. *'Among Schoolchildren'*, p.9.

53. Tom Paulin, 'Poetry: Language and History in Two Irish Poems', BBC2, Open University, 1990.

54. *'Among Schoolchildren'*, p.9.

55. Tom Paulin, 'Poetry: Language and History in Two Irish Poems'.

56. Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse*, p.55.

57. Anthony Easthope, p.72.

58. Seamus Heaney, 'The Makings of a Music', in *Preoccupations*, pp.61-78 (p.70).

59. See Toril Moi's chapter 'From Simone de Beauvoir to Jacques Lacan' in *Sexual Textual Politics*.

60. Maurice Riordan, 'Eros and History: On Contemporary Irish Poetry', *Crane Bag*, 19 (1985), 49-55 (p.49).

61. *'Among Schoolchildren'*, p.10.

62. Blake Morrison, p.45.

63. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.22.

Chapter 6: The Vowel of Earth

The lyrical celebration of Gaelic linguistic vistas in the *dinnseanchas* of *Wintering Out* is consistently threatened by the emergence at the close of the poems of more ominous primitive feelings textured by a dark earth, feminine in character. 'Anahorish' provokes wintry thoughts of primitive mound-dwellers moving within a Celtic landscape of dark wells and dunghills and 'Toome' descends to the floor of bogland to elvers that spawn a 'quasi-surrealist Medusa image'[1] that suggests Heaney is locating a primal, preliterate maternal principle within the Celtic Irish psyche. Under the pressure of sectarian warfare raging on the streets of Belfast in the early seventies, the linguistic heterotopias of the *dinnseanchas* give way to the dystopic fantasy of 'A Northern Hoard'. This poem prefigures the re-emergence of dark, atavistic passions within Ulster society which Heaney deals with in the subsequent poems of *Wintering Out* and in *North*.

The later verse in Part One of *Wintering Out* signals the shift away from the demarcation of territorial and linguistic ground emblematic of a reconcilable native and planter tradition, to one which registers a ground that is cankered, diseased and stained with blood. The geology of 'Roots' represents the apocalyptic sectarian eruption of forces contained within the cultural ground of Belfast: 'Out there.../ Where the fault is opening up again'. The mandrake plant rooted in Ulster soil and nourished by the blood of the warring dead elicits the historical recurrence of bloodletting in Ireland. 'I'm soaking by moonlight in tidal blood' resonates with the 'blood-dimmed tide' of the ceremonies of violence Yeats' records in 'The Second Coming'.[2]

The effect upon the poet's perception is coded in the volume's ocular imagery. 'No Sanctuary' exhibits the atavistic eye, fiery and canine, 'red dog's eyes of the night', an image which recurs in the fatigued eyes of 'Tinder', 'Red-eyed after the flames'. The quizzical eye of a wounded consciousness countenanced in 'Augury', 'What can fend us now/ Can soothe the hurt eye of the sun?', is answered by the discerning perception of the suffering poet in 'First Calf': eyes which smart and stream 'bloodshot tears' read and decode the 'semaphores of hurt' in the Ulster landscape. The surrealistic eye configured in 'Roots' by the 'Leaf membranes that lid the window' marks the onset of Heaney's estranging vision, 'All shifts dreamily'. The poet comprehends his wife's silhouetted body lying on the bed and lit by the glow of Belfast streetlamps as a figure of historical and mythical Ireland: 'Your body's moonstruck/ To drifted barrow, sunk glacial rock', a dream-image of a culture coming once more under the sway of archaic, nocturnal, feminine influences.

The consequent personal alienation emerging on home ground is encoded in the idiom of 'no sanctuary', in the poet's seared consciousness' (I'm cauterised, a black stump of home'), in images of conflagration ('we squat on cold cinder'), in northern discomfiture, sitting in a stone-age cave-mouth facing the 'tundra's whistling brush' and in the scrutiny of the mutilated body of Tollund Man ('I will feel lost,/ Unhappy and at home'). 'No Man's Land' especially codifies the uncertain ground which Heaney artistically inhabits in relation to his community. In the unoccupied neutral zone Heaney can only figure himself as a 'deserter', a poet who has illicitly left the public service of his community. He ponders his return to a home which is now a battle ground, 'Must I crawl back...to confront my smeared doorstep/ and what lumpy dead?'. If he stays in community, he is faced with the dilemma of condoning or condemning sectarian violence. Secondly, and potentially a more grievous problem, his poetry may countenance truths about his own community's

pathology which have the potential to be treacherous rather than supportive. The issue of what duty he has to his people is registered in the rhetorical question of 'Stump': 'What do I say if they wheel out their dead?', suggestive of the atavistic plague in community. In recognising these later poems of Part One of *Wintering Out* as a turning-point in Heaney's poetry, Andrews remarks 'This is the question that burdens Heaney from now on'.[3] Far from cultivating a role as shaman or spokesman for his people which he sought to compose in the *dinnseanchas* poetry, the poet's tribal inheritance threatens to drive a wedge between himself and his tribal community and threaten his relationship to place.

The Dark Watermark

The more spontaneous, lived crisis of being unaccommodated at home in Ulster is written into the later poems of Part I and Part II of *Wintering Out* published in 1972. The poet's internal emigration across the Irish border to settle in the Republic takes place in July 1972. *North* was published in June 1975. This subsequent volume represents a retrospective narrative of the man who has already 'escaped the massacre' ('Exposure', *N*) which he has lived through in the blood and death of Belfast. A majority of the poems in *North* were written during Heaney's sojourn at Glanmore in County Wicklow: 'Most of the poems in *North* were 'not written in the North of Ireland but written when I moved to County Wicklow'.[4] The plan and structure of the volume maps out a distinctive narrative whose dynamic drive is to plot the movement from Heaney's sense of being *at home* in farmhouse and in farm fields, recorded in the 'Mossbawn' duet which preface the volume, to his painful sense of exile as an *inner émigré* in the closing poem of the volume, 'Exposure', which marks his departure from Ulster to the Republic. In between, Heaney chronicles an excavation of Irish places, their history, myths and psychic drives, which is coterminous with an excavation of self, an exploration which plots his *emplacement* and incites his *displacement* from the home ground of Ulster.

The 'Mossbawn' duet which preface *North* act as stepping stones out of the deranged, surreal darkness of *Wintering Out* into the primitive dark of *North*. The two poems are dedicated to Mary Heaney, the poet's aunt: 'She was the affectionate centre [of the Mossbawn household]...a kind of second mother really'[5] and accordingly they portray the poet at home in traditional farmhouse and farm fields. Fieldworkers are pictured working unhurriedly in potato fields and the rural mother labours easily on a long tranquil afternoon in the farmhouse kitchen baking scones, the nutrient but also the nurture of life, 'love/ like a tinsmith's scoop/...in the meal bin'.

But if the two poems seek to honour the maternal and masculine principle in Heaney's sense of originary place there is a self-conscious artistic relationship to home which suggests that these icons of tradition are a little too staged. 'The Seed Cutters' directly acknowledges the painterly images of agrarian Irish Catholicism, 'Breughel,/ You'll know them if I can get them true', while, as Corcoran points out, 'Sunlight' has the stillness and archaic textures of an interior by Vermeer. Notably, the neat stitching and adornment of the seed potatoes in 'The Seed Cutters' are hidden from sight: 'The tuck and frill/ Of leaf-sprout is on the seed-potatoes/ Buried under the straw', symbolically registering the idealising and undiscerning condition of a native consciousness assimilated by landscape and ritual. Unavailable to the fieldworkers are more troubling knowledges about rural Ireland hinted at in their reverential submission to the land: 'They kneel under a hedge in a half-circle'. The 'milky gleam' of the split potato, emblematic of nature's feminine virtue, displays 'at the centre, a dark watermark', the sinister sign of the atavistic textures of native feeling for a maternal earth.

Peter McLean argues that a culture's repertoire of rites, the 'calendar customs' noted in 'The Seed Cutters', constructs the 'cultural *sacra*'[6] which

make and remake culture without revealing the sources of its legitimacy. In 'At A Potato Digging'(*DN*), potato-pickers, like potatoes, are 'Native/ to the black hutch of clay', registering an agrarian people in minatory religious thrall to a mythologised female earth, the 'black Mother' which gives birth to the potato harvest. But the earth can fail to provide, become the tomb of the 'famine god', a 'bitch earth' instead of a life-bearing force. Potatoes putrefy and rot, bring distressing insight figured in the imagery of 'eyes died hard'. People starve, recording the apocalyptic trauma of nineteenth-century potato blight and famine which indelibly marks the Irish imagination with a neurotic earth-complex: 'where potato diggers are/ you still smell the running sore'.

McLean proposes that it is at these religious, ritual and historical levels that the deep codes of a cultural order are transmitted, here are the blueprints which have to be interrogated in order to apprehend the genealogy of culture. In an interview with Seamus Deane, Heaney has commented that 'Poetry is born out of the watermarks and colourings of the self'.[7] As the mark impressed on paper during manufacture, visible when the paper is held up to the light, the watermark functions as a mediating metaphor for the 'dark watermark' which imprints the psyche of the seed-cutters, which then appears as the black print in Heaney's literary text, specifically *North*. It represents a translation of what is illiterate and unconscious in self, culture and history into what is literate and conscious.

A Pagan Place

'Belderg', is a drama of a dialogue between the poet and the archaeologist, Tom Delaney, which displays the poet's location within an educated and literate sphere whose impulse is to excavate and inscribe the illiterate, unconscious life of the historical culture. The poem elicits a vision of deep time of which the somnambulistic maternal and agrarian consciousness of

the 'Mossbawn' duet are unaware. Built into the etymology of *Mossbawn* is not only the history of Scots Protestant colonisation of a Gaelic Ireland which informs the *dinnseanchas* poems of *Wintering Out* but a deeper Nordic etymological root: 'But *moss*?'/ He crossed my old home's music/ With older strains of Norse'. Foster divulges the basis in language for this supposition: 'Moss is a Norse word for a bog, hence the crossing with the 'older strains' in the poem'.[8] Hence the 'forked root' of 'Mossbawn' is potentially rooted in Irish, Planter and Norse etymologies which descend through the deep time of Mossbawn.

The blanket bogs of the west of Ireland in 'Belderg' feature as keeper and bearer of the buried store of a pagan past, retaining and regurgitating ancient quernstones: 'They just kept turning up/ And were thought of as foreign-/...Quernstones out of a bog'. These stones are conceived of as 'foreign', characterising the surprising knowledges about the Irish past which announce the theme of *ostranenie* in the volume. The 'one-eyed' quernstone resonates with the 'Cyclop's eye' of 'Bogland', as pagan eye-witness to pre-history: 'To lift the lid of the peat/ And find the pupil dreaming/ Of neolithic wheat'. The quernstones ascending through bog from the neolithic stone floor demonstrate a 'persistence,/ A congruence of lives' in ancient and modern landscapes: 'stone-wall patternings/ Repeated before our eyes/ In the stone walls of Mayo'.

The lesson in the Mayo bog for Mossbawn is that the mother's act of baking sweet breads from flour is unmindfully informed by the tradition of quernstones which have ground grain in Ireland since time immemorial. The imaginative archaeological excavation is completed as the postmodernist, literate poet becomes a mythologised primitive self, passing through 'the eye of the quern', pouring like corn his dreaming mind down the eyelet of the quernstone, 'Grist to an ancient mill'. Heaney dramatises 'a moment of vertiginous vision' which not only gives rise to a strange view of Irish place but to the strangeness

of a whole world-view. The mythical tree which corresponds with the Yggdrasil of North mythology, 'the ash-tree which sustained the Teutonic and Viking world in being',[9] is invoked to feature a neolithic Irish cosmos supported by a tree of stones imagined as a spine which configures the archaic back-bone of Irish culture, 'A world-tree of balanced stones,/ Querns piled like vertebrae./ The marrow crushed to grounds'.

The Yggdrasil offers an ambiguous image of stone-age origin, the reassembled quernstones elicit an originary form of stone-age being, but the marrow of the originary culture, vital life substance, 'crushed to grounds', connotes the pulverised condition of the origin, broken, ground down into particles. If Heaney was a Derridean he might see the stones as traces of the ungraspable *transcendent* origin, the scattered quernstones thrown up by the bog are the persistent *traces* of a dismembered originary body. And 'grounds' implies the shattering not only of the original but also succesive grounds of being, each with its own notional distinctive racial, cultural and linguistic characteristics, fragmented by a history of violence.

An Dubh Ghall: The Black Stranger

Heaney's postmodernist knowledge of the fragmentary nature of modern cultural identities brings to the fore the multiple condition of an historical Irish culture. Heaney has said that *North* is first an allusion to the North of Ireland, and second, to a wider Northern European history and mythology of Scandinavian (Norse-Danish-Viking) and Teutonic (Anglo-Saxon) society as they have periodically impacted upon Ireland. In this regard the volume offers a form of 'de-synthesising historical myth' by which modern-day Ulster can be understood, as a syncretic amalgam of many cultures. 'Belderg', 'Funeral Rites', 'North', 'Viking Dublin: Trial Piece' and 'The Digging Skeleton' constitute a quintet of poems which represent Heaney's archaeological

excavation of the Scandinavian and Viking strata of language, culture and race sedimented within Irish civilisation. His purpose is to discern the impact of these histories upon contemporary consciousness in Ulster.

The sign under which the Vikings first appear in Heaney's poetic at the close of *Door into the Dark*, 'A black hawk bent on the sail', resonates with the influence of Ted Hughes' evocation of the Viking *pagus*, 'black/ Sailed unfamiliar, wind at her back/ A huge and birdless silence'. The imagery betokens the malign pigmentation of a rapacious and predatory masculine Viking spirit abroad in Irish history. In popular notation, the Vikings were known as the Black Foreigner: 'The *dubh ghall*, or black stranger, was the name originally given by the Irish to the Norseman. With intermarriage and assimilation, the title of *dubh ghall* passed to the offspring *and became* known to outsiders as the 'Black Irish'.[10]

In 'Funeral Rites' the 'igloo brows' of the contemporary Ulster dead and the 'black glacier/ of each funeral' are cultural syntagms of *an dubh ghall* which denotes the Norse deposit of dark, barbarian, neolithic textures of feeling within the modern structures of Irish identity. The poem announces the challenge such a literate knowledge presents to the poet, the difficulty of writing against being *at home* in Mossbawn. He is invited to publish the unconscious pagan and violent barbarian drives within his customary Ulster Catholic rural community which has given him the affection and nurture noted in the 'Mossbawn' duet. Heaney opens 'Funeral Rites' with a Joycean image of his own childhood subservience to the ritual beliefs of his Catholic community which ally him to the kneeling fieldworkers in 'The Seed Cutters': 'I knelt courteously/ admiring it all'. However, the portrait of the poet bearing coffins of the sectarian dead into Viking, Danish and neolithic landscapes, 'I shouldered a kind of manhood', acts as a correlative for the adult poet bearing the burden of his art within a tribal culture to which he owes allegiance. Linked to his adult masculinity, the

art of publication becomes fundamentally an Oedipal rite, confronting the paternalistic authorities in his own native culture and in the masculine Protestant hegemony.

'Night-Piece', 'Gone', 'Dream' and 'The Outlaw' at the beginning of *Door into the Dark* configure in the 'dull pounding' and 'uneasy whinny' of the stabled horse and the unhousing of the outlawed bull, restless, constrained masculine, phallic energies in the body politic and in Heaney's poetic. In 'Dream' a billhook, an agrarian weapon, hacks at a standing stalk which is by simile a telegraph pole. It then shape-shifts into a man's head - conceivably a condensed Oedipal rite figuring the stir of a rebellious native masculinism against the Protestant industrial hegemony, while also signalling the poet's psychological combat with the phallic powers, Viking and Catholic, in his indigenous Irish culture.

In 'Gone' the bolted horse features the burst of masculine energy out of harness, but in this instance Heaney fails to compose the phallic dark, the bolted horse is the mysterious power escaping composition, 'Clod only in shods/ Leaving this stable unmade'. 'The Forge' figures the poet as smithy who is called away from the mechanics of a daylight modernity by 'the hammered anvil's short-pitched ring' into the very heart of a quite magical phallic darkness: 'the anvil must be somewhere in the centre'/ Horned as a unicorn'. Recalling 'a clatter/ Of hoofs' he sets to work on a consonantal language of poetry which can forge the elemental presence in language and culture of powerful masculine energies: 'To beat real iron out, to work the bellows'. This is the self-reflexive mythologising of the poet's own role which displays his linguistic and artistic mission, to poetically shoe the masculine energies in northern consonants embedded in the linguistic strata of a contemporary Irish culture.

The linguistic forging of the 'hammered shod of a bay' in 'North' fulfils the project itemised in *Door into the Dark.* The poem elaborates a narrative of artistic engagement with the powers of the dark: the attempt to control and compose the unruly, wild masculine energies within history and culture. Located on a stark, wild coastal landscape, the poet's sensibilities detect an 'Atlantic thundering' whose elemental powers provoke a vision of masculine Viking adventure. They appear here as 'fabulous raiders', masters of the wild seas, while in 'Viking Dublin' the poet empathises with the thrill of the Viking adventurer: 'Come fly with me,/ come sniff the wind/ with the expertise/ of the Vikings'. Virtuosos of violence, the Norsemen are moved by the spirit of Thor, the God of Thunder whose 'hammer swung/ to geography and trade'. Heaney's potent poetic hammer swings to the same beat as the thunderous Thor, shaping a history which reveals the masculine imprint of a Viking past upon an Ulster present.

The curt, consonantal northern language laid down in the word-hoard of an Irish culture composes the pagan barbarism in the poem: 'long (OE) swords (OE)...in the solid/ belly (OE) of stone (OE) ships (OE),/ those hacked (OE) and glinting (ON)/ in the gravel (Celtic) of thawed (OE) streams (OE)'.[11] The lustre of dead Vikings mingling in the coarse, rough, gravel of the melting waters evokes the visceral energies and language deposited in the stream of history after the thaw of Viking settlement, the northern pagan residue. The rhythmic beating out of a plosive Norse and Old English consonantal speech in verse sounds the barbarian energies in Irish culture. Heaney forges a vision of the Irish as an endemically combative and conscienceless race of people. *North* represents the poet's riposte to Joyce's artist, Stephen Dedalus, who desired to 'forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of the race'.[12]

The attention to phonology and etymology marks a return in this Viking poetics to the dynamic of composition as an auditory act, the laying down in

Heaney's poetry of sounds, textures and musicality of dialect and phonology which inhere within racial and cultural lexicons. The place-names in the Viking poetry, Mossbawn, Strangford, Carlingford, Arklow, Orkney and Dublin, operate as a form of Viking *dinnseanchas*, opening up to expanded view the deepening awareness of Heaney's poetic to Irishness as deposits in the descending storeys of the linguistic and historical past. Heaney quotes the Ulster poet, W.R.Rodgers in 'The Character of Ireland' to index the vigorous language and energies deposited in the masculine textures of Ulster speech: 'an abrupt people/ who like the spiky consonants of speech/...get a kick out of/ tin-cans, fricatives, fornication, staccato talk'.[13]

Making History: The Buoyant Migrant Line

The inference of Heaney's Viking poetics is again that language is much more onomatopoeic and ontological than either structuralist or post-structuralist theories allow for. The phoneme is a site of oral and psychic excess issuing from the racial and cultural body which supplements the empirical capacity of the word to name. *Language possesses shape and texture, as well as sound and* signification, all of which compose or reveal the characteristics of the racial psyche from which the language originates. The poet's verse line is attuned to and constituted by the lexicon of pagan textures of sound deposited in the Ulster Irish word-hoard which he burrows into in 'North': 'Compose in darkness...trust the feel of what nubbed treasure/ your hands have known'.

Heaney's subterranean excavation of the word-hoard evinces an image of the poet and the poetic line being subjected to language and not just expressive of it. The poetic line is not only constituted *by* language but also *within* language. It is a very obvious image of the writing up of a discourse, the poet refloating knowledges of the past within a language field of the present, illustrating how history is mediated through the artist's calligraphy. In 'North'

the 'longship's swimming tongue/... buoyant with hindsight' signs the tongue of the poet moving through the element of an Old English and Norse pagan lexicon refloated in Heaney's vistas of a Viking past. 'Viking Dublin' replicates the imagery of a buoyant historical language, 'a longship, a buoyant/ migrant line./ That enters my longhand,/ turns cursive'. The Viking trial-piece recovered from the mud of the Liffey becomes subject to Heaney's own discourse: 'cursive' denoting a handwriting joined in a flowing style adverts to Heaney's creative inscription of the trial-piece, and the notion of 'cursive' as a printing type adverts to its achieved inscription in the printed text.

Heaney is in touch here with postmodernist issues of writing which Friel raises in *Making History*. The bone-piece represents a self-conscious replication of the poetic page. Its representation as 'A small outline/...incised, a cage/ or trellis to conjure in', configures the frame in which the labyrinthine line of a Viking's composition is drawn as the magical space analogous to the white space of Heaney's page and the intricate lines he composes. The printed word of the poetic text is a detached self-conscious medium which confabulates with the magical, illiterate, unconscious domains of culture. As W. J. Ong proposes, the 'white space' of the page and black print of the scripted line take on a significance that 'leads directly to the modern and the postmodern world'.[14] In both the textual and discursive sense 'Viking Dublin' is a postmodernist text in the manner described by Linda Hutcheon: 'A text which is constantly self-conscious about the status of its own art and displays the processes of production of history'.[15]

The sinuous line-drawing 'Like a child's tongue/ following the toils/ of his own calligraphy' creates an image of the poet's own straining tongue like that of a child's, denoting the poet's own movement from a state of innocence to one of experience, the discoveries that Heaney as a pupil of language and poetry makes about the dark, secret, pagan matrix of culture to which the intuitive,

somnabulistic processes of writing give access. The line on the trial piece, 'foliage, bestiaries,/ interlacings elaborate' rehearses Heaney's own poetic line which is constituted by a profound zoology. Like the emblematic beasts of Hughes' poetry signifying English energies, along the line of Heaney's poetry in *Death of a Naturalist* there is encountered a zoology of white swans, black hawks, bullfrogs, bats, rats and fish, emblematic of violent forces in Irish culture.

In *Door into the Dark*, horse and bull, salmon and eel are the zoomorphic emblems of native, sectarian masculine and feminine energies. At the close of 'Tinder' in *Wintering Out*, Ireland's 'new history' of Ulster sectarianism is figured as 'canine', in 'Midnight' as lupine and 'Augury' prognosticates the inevitability for the inquiring poet of the excavation of chthonic forces in the historical culture in *North*: 'What can.../ Turn back/ The rat on the road'. The appearance of the zoological emblems of the dark tracks the breakdown of a tame and domesticated perception of life and register the discovery by the boy/poet of darker, more sinister modes of existence now encountered in *North*. What emerges in the Viking verse and Bog poems is the encounter with the poet's deepest-seated fears; the most tabooed knowledges within culture which stimulate the most profuse creativity.

'Unscarfing/ a zoomorphic wake,/ a worm of thought/ I follow into the mud' in 'Viking Dublin', the writing publishes the hidden visceral, telluric aspects of language, psyche and racial sensibility symptomised by the trail of animal forms and symbols along the syntagmatic axis of his poetic line. 'A Lough Neagh Sequence' in *Door into the Dark* has already employed an imagery of fishing line and black eel to represent the poetic line and its catch. 'Setting' represents the fisherman setting the lines for eels as an archetypal poetic activity: 'A line goes out of sight and out of mind' - the fisherman's line fishing the waters of the lough a correlative for the poet's line fishing the

unconscious depths of culture. The image of an intuitive, linguistic process which fishes the threatening labyrinthine realm of the linguistic and cultural unconscious is presented in 'Viking Dublin' in similes of eel-like slipperiness, elusiveness and astonishment: 'like an eel swallowed/ in a basket of eels,/ the line amazes itself/ eluding the hand/ that fed it'. In 'Funeral Rites' the eel mutates to the full-blown 'serpent/ in its grassy boulevard' which encodes the black funeral procession moving northwards to the great chambers of the Boyne, the serpent, so to speak, in the garden of Mossbawn.

An Irish Necropolis

'Viking Dublin' realises a legendary vision of darkness and death in which Viking Dublin, Hamlet's Elsinore and Heaney's Ulster feature in deeply laid plots of a blighted history. The archaeological dig in Brian Friel's *Volunteers* uses Dublin as a site of excavation of Viking settlement to dramatise the censorship within sentimental Catholic and humanist mythologies of the Irish past. Through the medium of the dissolute Keeney playing the role of a dislocated Hamlet, the drama divulges darker, violent knowledges of Irish society and its tribalism. In 'Viking Dublin', Heaney transforms into an Irish Hamlet, Dublin gravedigger and Irish necromancer, descending into the darkest, deepest, most diseased domains of the collective political and historical unconscious:

> I am Hamlet the Dane,
> skull-handler, parablist,
> smeller of rot
> in the state, infused
> with its poisons

In *Wintering Out* the Coleridgean epigraph to the sequence 'A Northern Hoard' of the 'Spirit that plagued us so' presents the historical enmity between Catholic and Protestant but also concedes a diseased psychopatholgy of the Ulster Catholic community.

The poet adventures forth to imbibe and diagnose the malignant sectarian and atavistic spirit rooted in his culture: in 'Stump', 'I am riding to plague again' which in 'No Man's Land' is characterised by the poet's contraction of the bacillus 'spirochete' infection. The pathologies of the body politic and the communal Ulster Catholic body are worked into 'Roots' which codes Belfast as an 'old Gommorah', a city of evil and wickedness, into 'No Man's Land' and 'Augury' where 'infected sutures/ and ill-knit bone' and an ailing landscape marked by polluted lakes and 'diseased' fish with 'pale crusted sore', respectively suggest the wounded state of the province. The title poem of *North* attributes a racial, psychic pathology to cycles of tribal and sectarian violence: 'exhaustions nominated peace/ memory incubating the spilled blood'. The slaked and wearied atavistic passions bring a halt to feuding, the neurotic germ foments within the unconscious life until the atavistic passion is rehatched in a renewed tribalism. The Hamletian poet descends into the boneyard of Viking Dublin, an Irish necropolis, to diagnose the diseased pathologies intered in history and psyche.

Heaney is offering a biology of culture which speaks of a pathological racial determinism of tribal quarrel which Cairns and Richards argue amounts to a numbing form of racial-biological determinism:

> An historical determinism seems to result from too deep a digging in which the modern desire to engage actively in the historical process is rendered impotent by the very completeness of intellectual understanding.[16]

But any view of the racial as deterministic has to be tempered by the notion that the racial itself is determined by history, that is to say, the repressions occurring through time become a racial pathology. Therefore genes are not just determining in a rationalist fashion, but are part of a biological-historical dialectic. This raises further questions as to whether the gene, Viking, Irish or any other, is itself acted upon by history, or is the gene an empirical, rationalist

image or projection of the historical psyche. These are vital issues in terms of any theory of racial or genetic determinism.

Dillon Johnstone, too, perceives the evocation of an ambiguously racial-cultural pathology in Heaney's work, 'inherent in the Viking foundations of Dublin is Irish man's homicidal nature'.[17] By way of Hamlet and then by way of a recitation of Jimmy Farrel's speech in Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, Heaney comes upon a Viking Dublin which is a 'vast tribal House of the Dead',[18] the rounded stones of the cobbled quay metamorphose in the necromancer's vision to a 'skull-capped ground'.

The anatomical plate of the digging skeletons in 'A Digging Skeleton', suggestively disinterred out of storage containers on the Dublin quayside - 'anatomical plates/ Buried along these dusty quays' - provokes further dark imaginings of a compulsive, pathological death-instinct in the culture of Ireland. 'Quays' is a word of Celtic origin, the 'red slobland around the bones' reaches out etymologically to Gaelic vistas ('slob' meaning 'mire' is from the Irish Gaelic 'slab' meaning 'mud'), intimating at the bloody, mired, bog consciousness of Ireland which colours and textures the very bones of the culture. The sense of an overpowering history of uncontained death is featured in the resurrected skeletal cadavers who are successively Vikings, navvies, fieldworkers and, finally, the artist himself, digging the 'unrelenting soil' of Ireland, a compulsive orientation by the historical peoples of Ireland towards an unpitying land and dark earth, undiminishing in its powers of dominion and demand for sacrifice.

Heaney is driving his spiritual and aesthetic roots into the pagan and Catholic iconographies and necropolises of Irish culture, shifting the biological and the historical into a metaphysical mode. The Irish experience is coloured by the horrors of Hell-like suffering: 'by the sweat of our stripped brows/ We earn

our deaths'. The digging skeletons figure as the unconscious of the culture, the sacral darkness which is exiled and repressed as dangerous, but is always likely to return to revitalise violence and vengeance. The resurrectional re-entry of earth-orientated metaphysical drives into consciousness represents death coursing back into life, the recurrently unredeemed status of Ireland. The digging skeletons become emblems which articulate the deep psychic and metaphysical structures and motives to action in Irish culture though they tend to alienate the historical-political pole of the dialectic of determinism.

The Traitor's Breath

Heaney has been preoccupied throughout with disintering the past and has used digging as a trope to figure the mental and imaginative processes of historical excavation beginning with 'Digging': 'Between my finger and my thumb/ The squat pen rests./ I'll dig with it'. Shakespeare's Hamlet as gravedigger and Baudelaire's digging skeleton offer accomplished emblems of the artist excavating the dark, earth-oriented psyche and culture. The poet's 'Mysterious candid studies' make him a frank illustrator of the strange and curious anatomy of the Irish historical culture. The dark, demonised vistas of Irish society portrayed in the Viking verse is playing off against 'The Seed Cutters'. The fieldworkers at ease in the agrarian fields pictured within a Brueghelian framework: 'Breughel/ You'll know them if I can get them true', is counterpointed by the digging skeletons who are intimated as 'emblems of the truth'.

The radical literary activity of excavating and inscribing culture notifies the knowledge that the very act of writing is becoming for Heaney a detribalising dynamic threatening traditional bonds to family and community which Mossbawn symbolises. The digging skeleton adverts to the ambivalence in the poet's literate-illiterate opposition, his poetry both his redemption - 'our

one repose/ When the bleeding instep finds its spade' - and his damnation - a 'traitor's breath'. Poetry is a treacherous utterance representing an excoriation of the poet's formational identity which simultaneously threatens to exile and alienate him from his tribe. Writing implicates the poet in a structure of guilt-feelings for publishing forbidden knowledges of the social group to whom he belongs while also having the potential to liberate the man from inhibiting social ideologies. The Viking verse serves as a rite of passage for the poet through the subterranean pathways of the masculine principles operative in Ulster structures of identity. The publishing of the dark watermark in culture, the exposure of the secret, taboo and unconscious forms of the *cultural sacra* which provide groups in culture with its legitimacies, represents a passage out from under the authority of his tribal fathers and their sectarian opponents into the ranks of a masculine order of a literate culture.

The Bog People

While the Viking verse deals with a barbarian masculine principle in Irish culture, the other major group of poems in *North*, the bog poems, deal with the feminine principle, the mythic construct of Ireland as a goddess activating and acted upon by a masculine principle. The icons and ideologies which order and mask the maternal principle in Irish life are opened up to question in the dialectic between the nurturing mother of 'Sunlight' and the grieving mothers of 'Funeral Rites'. The 'whitened nails' of the domestic rural mother in 'Sunlight' which figure as a metonymy for maternal purity is played off against the deceased sectarian victim in 'Funeral Rites' whose 'nails/ were darkened', the declaration of dark, secret neurotic female drives in culture. In the latter poem the women group in totemistic veneration around the sensual flames of candles suggestively phallic, 'wax melted down/ and veined the candles./ and flames hovering/ to the women hovering'. From this point in the volume the domestic mother of 'Sunlight' is incorporated into the unconscious

dark where she becomes one of the 'Somnambulent women' moving through 'emptied kitchens/ imagining our slow triumph/ towards the mounds' as the funeral cortege passes by the 'blinded home'. The obeisant maternalism turned dark is a narcotic, undiscerning femininity which secretly approves the dark death cult of male sacrifice to a feminine earth. This is the maternal condition which the bog poems deal with in a mytho-historic form.

The Bog Poems of *Wintering Out* and *North*: 'Nerthus', 'The Tollund Man', 'Come to the Bower', 'Bog Queen', 'The Grauballe Man', 'Punishment', 'Strange Fruit' and 'Kinship', are heavily influenced by Heaney's reading of P.V. Glob's *The Bog People* in 1969 as he recounts in his essay 'Feeling into Words'. The book speaks about the discovery of the preserved bodies of bog men and women in Jutland dating from the Iron Age, the sacrificial victims of a primitive northern religion. Heaney reports that:

> The author, P.V. Glob, argues convincingly that a number of these, and in particular the Tollund Man...were ritual sacrifices to the Mother Goddess, the goddess of the ground who needed new bridegrooms each winter to bed with her in her sacred place in the bog, to ensure the renewal and fertility of the territory in the spring. Taken in relation to the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for that cause whose icon is Kathleen Ni Houlihan, this is more than an archaic barbarous rite: it is an archetypal pattern.[19]

The figures encountered in Glob's text - Grauballe Man, Tolland Man, Windeby Girl, Moira Bog Woman and the Decapitated Head of Roum - are put to work by Heaney to shape a comprehensive mytho-historical understanding of sectarian conflict in Ulster which deals with the matriarchal impulse in Irish agrarian and political culture and represents a rite of passage for the poet through the *cultural sacra* attaching to the feminine.

The Danish bog of *Wintering Out* is constituted as the feminine ground of the fertility goddess Nerthus, to whom figures such as Tollund Man and Grauballe Man were sacrificed. 'Nerthus' renders the female sexual organ as a voracious and wounding 'gouged split', the symbolic goddess of a violent

fertility drama played out in 'The Tollund Man' where the male victim is a phallic 'Bridegroom to the goddess' who 'tightened her torc on him/ And opened her fen,/ Those dark juices working/ Him to a saint's kept body'. Heaney's design is to make a direct connection between Danish Iron Age sacrifice to the Mother Goddess of the Earth and modern political sacrifice to Mother Ireland: 'I just tried to link ritual killings and fertility rites of the Iron Age, which Tollund Man was part of, to ritual killings and violence in contemporary Ireland'.[20] Each is bound up with 'archaic religious passions' as signalled by Heaney's troubling sense of familiarity with ancient sacrifice rites:

> Out there in Jutland
> In the old man-killing parishes
> I will feel lost,
> Unhappy and at home.

In the allusion in 'The Tollund Man' to the four Catholic brothers 'massacred by Protestant paramilitaries in the 1920s...trailed over the sleepers of the railway line as a kind of mutilation',[21] the poem recreates the death rites of twentieth-century Irish tribalism which takes place on 'Our holy ground'. 'The Grauballe Man' in *North* also makes the equation between Iron Age Dane as sacrificial victim and Irish paramilitarism and sacrificial martyrdom. At the end of the poem the 'hooded victim, slashed and dumped' might belong equally to the Danish past or the Ulster present.

The Dark-Bowered Queen

The duet of poems in *North*, 'Come to the Bower' and 'Bog Queen', are very much Irish bog poems in which Danish depositions are put into the context of an indigenous native angst and reverence for the land. P. V. Glob records that the Moira Bog Woman was recovered from an Irish bog in County Down in 1780 by a turf-cutter and subsequently appropriated by Lady Moira, a member of the Protestant Ascendancy.[22] As in the Viking verse, migration, deposition and retreat of the northern ice sheet functions as a metaphor for a human

history. The Bog Queen is a 'black glacier' and her breasts 'soft moraines', glacial deposits which are a sign of cultural diffusion and racial deposition of Nordic impulses in the culture and gene pool of Ireland. The Bog Queen's Baltic 'amber' derives from a past, Nordic in its compass bearing: 'gemstones dropped/ in the peat floe/ like the bearings of history', just as in 'Punishment' the 'amber beads' connect the IRA scapegoats to the Danish Windeby Girl.

The twinned poems 'Come to the Bower' and 'Bog Queen' play out dramas of colonial Ireland, each encoding the sacrificial death and resurrection of the bog goddess as analogue to an emergence into the Ulster Catholic psyche and history of the suppressed fetishistic reverence and desire for the land. 'Come to the Bower' alludes to a popular Irish folk ballad where the 'bower' is construed as the sensual, natured, female land of Erin conflated in the imagination with political images of Ireland. The ballad makes a call to all Irishmen abroad to return home to rid the land of colonial tyranny and oppression. The poem draws upon this tradition by utilising the literal recovery of the bog body by the peasant turf-cutter as a metaphor for the re-emergence into peasant consciousness of the agrarian and political desire for the land.

The poet's erotic mythopoeic rescue of the Moira bog woman dramatises this process. The poet's imaginative probing of vegetation and earth is rendered as a sensual, sexual act, 'My hands come, touched/ By sweet-briar and tangled vetch./ Forraging'. The touch of the hand is a trope for Heaney's artistic processes but the overriding point is the narcotic eroticism which roots Heaney and the Irishman's repressed psychic urges in an instinctually organised feeling for a landscape full of vegetative and zoological life. The sexual unpinning and unwrapping of the bog woman's clothes, the voyeuristic scrutiny and the sexual gesturing towards the prize of her *mons veneris* is a narrative of the arousal and consummation of the sensualised, preliterate imagination's intercourse with the

dark mother and the dark land: 'I reach past/ The riverbed's washed/ Dream of gold to the bullion/ Of her Venus bone'.

The sexual release in the poem which accompanies the bog woman's liberation from the ground, 'spring water/starts to rise round her', takes on political connotations, an aqueous and seasonal imagery which hints at a resurgent political rebellion whose cause is Irish nationhood. The poem registers the same political ritualism as remembered in 'Requiem for the Croppies'(*DD*). Written to commemorate Easter 1916 it takes the 'blushing hillsides' of the Vinegar Hill uprising in 1798 as exemplary of the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for that 'cause whose icon is Kathleen Ni Houlihan'.[23] She is generalised in 'Kinship' as 'Our mother ground/...sour with the blood/ of her faithful,/ they lie gargling/ in her sacred heart'. Recovery of the Moira bog woman in 'Come to the Bower'is a psychologised political narrative of that same recurrent and ritual martyrdom for the land of Ireland which re-emerges into the Ulster Catholic psyche in the late 1960s.

'Bog Queen', too, reads as a colonial narrative: 'It begins with an apt analogue of dormant nationhood ('I lay waiting') and ends with an equally plausible 'rising' ('and I rose from the dark').[24] At the opening of the poem the Bog Queen is sited between symbols of native Catholic and colonial Protestant occupation of the land 'Between turf-face and demesne wall'. At the close of the poem the violated body of the Bog Woman, 'hacked-bone, skull-ware', re-emerges out of the bog in an image of rebirth, 'The plait of my hair,/ a slimy birth-cord/ of bog, had been cut/ and I rose from the dark'. It represents the reawakening of those atavistic energies hibernating in the unconscious dark whose demands are for a regenerative political sacrifice.

The pigmentation of the demanding bog and goddess is essentially dark and black, a syntagm of the 'dark watermark' that imprints the Mossbawn

psyche in 'The Seed Cutters'. In 'Come to the Bower', the bog woman is given as 'the dark-bowered queen' residing in the 'black maw/ Of the peat', an image of the voracious mystic mouth and stomach of the devouring earth mother who consumes her impassioned sons. Heaney's darkening vision of a consuming, female sexuality demanding of a tribal and political sacrifice suggest an archetype of the terrible or devouring mother characterised at the close of 'Kinship' as the goddess who 'swallows/ our love and terror'.

Once again, Heaney's poetic dramas and polemic commentary tend to propose the psychic fetishism as cause more than effect of violence. In making the connection between archaic and contemporary political violence, the poet tends to relegate or marginalise the way in which political history constellates or conjures up these mythological pagan figures to mediate the crisis in the historical, hailed into being from the sump of the historical imagination in the face of the sectarian barbarism of the modern Ulster state. Under pressure, the *anawim*, as Eagleton biblically terms the socially dispossessed in *The Body as Language* before his shift to a full-blooded Marxism, have recourse to a metaphysical imagery outlawed but paradoxically coaxed into being by the rationalism of the Ulster/British Protestant state.

Gendering Culture

Many modern critics have been concerned about the representation of gender in Irish text as an issue of sexual politics. The major feminist concern has been with the way in which women have been characterised in a male-authored Irish national tradition and the way such representation has been fused with a nationalist political identity, as in the figures of Dark Rosaleen, Kathleen Ni Houlihan or the Bog Queen, for example. It has been argued that such inscription represents a male semantic colonisation of woman. Elizabeth Butler Cullingford in '"Thinking of Her...as...Ireland": Yeats, Pearse and Heaney'

employs a dualist view to suggest that the representation of the Bog Goddess is a 'function of the patriarchal opposition between male Culture and female Nature, which defines women as the passive and silent embodiments of matter...to confirm and reproduce the social arrangements which contrast women as material possessions'.[25]

The Irish poet, Eavan Boland, has taken specific issue with the way in which women have been coded or omitted from twentieth-century Irish poetry and cites the absence of women writers from the Field Day Anthology in 1992 as a material example of an oppressive Irish male consciousness which has written women out of history. Boland claims that modern female writers are responding by putting a critique right into the middle of Irish literature, suggesting that women are looking to rewrite much of Ireland's historical legend and myth:

> When you get women writing, becoming the authors of the poem, all that infrastructure of imagery has to change, there is a new dialogue of nationhood, there is a whole refreshment of the assumptions of nationhood.[26]

In her own appositely titled volume, *Outside History*, the title poem presents an imagery of female exclusion and subsequent egress out of myth into history and literature:

> These stars...have always been
> outside history...Under them remains
>
> a place where you found
> you were human, and
>
> a landscape in which you know you are mortal.
> And a time to choose between them.
> I have chosen:
>
> out of myth into history I move to be
> part of that ordeal
> whose darkness is
>
> only now reaching me from those fields.[27]

Boland prepares to allow the dark of a male-oriented history to enter her own consciousness.

Cairns and Richards from a position of cultural politics in *Writing Ireland* also find the symbolic standing of the Irish as female victim deeply problematic: 'The achievement of such a stance is problematic in the extreme, and not least because of the extent it relies on the reappropriation of essentially Arnoldian categories'.[28] Their reference is to the nineteenth-century English/British discourse of nations which invoked categories of sexuality to define race and relationship. In his essay 'On the Study of Celtic Literature', Matthew Arnold ascribed a feminine principle to the Celtic people, producing the Celt as 'particularly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy'.[29] Cairns and Richards argue that Arnold's ascription was part of a discourse of Celticism which produced Ireland as the image of nineteenth-century bourgeois woman, a passive, ineffectual figure watched over by a dominant bourgeois male hegemony. Bogland, too is a typical feature of a British colonial discourse about Ireland. The notation of the Irish as 'Bog Irish' or 'Bog Trotter' has been a means of racially categorising the colonised as a dark, primitive, backward people. Set against the background of medium-grade neo-colonial warfare and within a poetry dealing with the historical native-colonialist conflict, Heaney's bog poems command the status of an intervention into racial and cultural discourse.

The cultural architectonics of the female and the bog function in a similar vein to *orientalism* as described by Edward Said in *Orientalism* which in Ireland's case produced 'a mutually exclusive discourse of gender, race and politics advantageously preserving the Englishman's "upper hand"'.[30] The questions that arise are thus twofold. Is this strategic position endemically problematic to Heaney's own symbolic discourse which constantly risks reproduction of the discursive categories which define Ireland as a subordinated, inferior people in relation to England? Or, is Heaney's discursive position altered by a post-colonialist age? In the latter view Heaney's discourse would

seek to indict the historical barbarism of the imperialist by reversing the 'normal' relations of dominance and subservience of the 'feminine' colonised to 'masculine' coloniser, taking up the moral ground of the suffering victim in order to incriminate the violent colonialist aggressor.

Anne Bernard in 'Creativity and Procreativity' warns against feminist and political readings of poetry which purely regard such textual representation 'as strategic myths invented by man'.[31] She maintains that the values of desire, otherness and intimacy which figures such as the aisling and bog goddess exhibit, are in themselves opposed to the dominating and technocratic mentality which order the phallocentric and logocentric patriarchal society and invokes Derrida to recognise 'the positive value of otherness and of the difference, which have up to now been suppressed by "the hegemony of the *logos*"'.[32] In 'Myth and Motherland' Richard Kearney argues that myth invokes '*something else* which precedes or exceeds it, which remains, as it were, sub-conscious, or supra-conscious'.[33] In Kearney's case this excess or supplement is political and psychological, signalling the sense of lack generated by political colonisation. The goddess, in Heaney's case, the Bog Goddess, is 'a symbolic projection of a *prohibited* sense of self-possession',[34] a mother under political pressure summoning her faithful to reclaim the lost land.

Certainly, the mythological creation of the earth as feminine might be understood through the notion of the 'matrix', a reference to the substance or environment of origin. Etymologically, the term enters the English language in the sixteenth-century to signify the womb and ultimately derives from the Latin *mater*, meaning mother. In this view, the feminine is hierarchicalised above the masculine as the controlling life and sexual principle. This is evident in Friel's dramas *Philadephia, Here I Come* and *Dancing at Lughnasa* where the five sisters constitute a local, rural matrix: the splintering of these feminine groups

brings with it disintegration in the cultural and psychological formation of Irish sociality.

Strange Fruit

Heaney demonstrates his self-awareness of the issue of representation in the bog poems by again utilising an imagery of the literate and illiterate self. The Bog Woman stands as archetypal antithesis to the primary school mistress, Miss Walls, and her sentimentalising of the zoological world in 'Death of a Naturalist'. The encoding of the preliterate, unconscious feminine realm in 'Bog Queen' within a vocabulary of the threatening, secret and cryptic 'spawn' of the flax-dam, discloses Heaney's psychic relocation at the heart of what is suppressed and hidden in the Mossbawn landscape by official societal discourse. 'My body was braille/ for the creeping influences' suggests a visceral form of experience in which the world and the word are felt bodily and psychically, indicating a return to an outlawed vision of place which has been cyclically digested ('the illiterate roots/ pondered and died/ in the cavings/ of stomach and socket'). The primal stirrings which have been intered in the unconscious of the historical culture is now recovered and converted by the hieratic poet into printed text. In delivering the Bog Queen from the dark in 'Come to the Bower' the poet acts as an artistic midwife delivering to textual awareness the unconscious motivations within his culture - the long prepared for, dangerous, poetic act.

'Kinship' uses the bog landscape symbolically as a form of organic runic alphabet to represent a primitive, illiterate relationship to ground which underwrites his modern scripted text: 'Kinned by hieroglyphic/ peat on a spreadfield/ to the strangled victim'. The poem emblematises the bog as an uncultivated tribal ground of tribal totem and taboo, 'Ground that will strip/ its dark side,/ nesting ground,/ outback of my mind.' This imagery renders the

bog as a form of Lacanian semiurgy, a mind mirroring its own unconscious domain as promised by 'big-eyed Narcissus' in 'Personal Helicon'. The bog is a mimesis in language of the preliterate states of mind, the ultimate stripping away of illusions about his own psyche and the culture from which he comes. Standing as a counterpoint to the 'Mossbawn' duet which preface *North*, Heaney announces from the locus of the illiterate bog and the literary text: 'I grew out of all this'.

The strange mythical vistas of bogland are countenanced by an exotic manner of seeing and speaking designated in 'Kinship' as 'each open pool/ the unstopped mouth/ of an urn, a moon-drinker,/ not to be sounded by the naked eye'. Empirical sight is discarded and an untamed, illiterate eye drunk on a feminine strangeness floating in an erotic, death-laden world of dark happenings is instated. The bizarre hyperbolic portrait in 'Strange Fruit' of the 'terrible/ Beheaded girl' of Roum at which Heaney gazes erotically is the ultimate estranging emblem in *North* of the pagan death-cult in Danish and Irish culture.[35] Encoded in an imagery of food, an emptied, desiccated rind of fruit - which recalls the death-mask of the pagan Hallowee'n celebration in 'No Sanctuary' - the decapitated head is now served up as a poetic offering of the ghoulish eroticism of a pathologised culture. The paludal, vegetative 'wet fern of her hair', broken nose 'dark as a turf clod', eyes, ghoulish 'pools in the old workings', represent the face of a radical *otherness*, the 'Strange Fruit' which is the artistic harvest of the making strange of culture. Reminiscent of the Catholic Marian prayer which blesses 'the fruit of thy [Mary's] womb, Jesus', Heaney delivers out of the unblessed womb of the bog the fruits of the culture's pathological and political disorder.

The Bog Burst

'Kinship' closes with an indictment of English and British colonialism worked through an imagery of Roman conquest. In 'Feeling into Words', Heaney has called the Ulster conflict the 'tail-end of a struggle' between 'an indigenous territorial numen...call her Mother Ireland, Kathleen Ni Houlihan' whose sovereignty has been 'temporarily usurped or infringed by a new male cult' whose 'godhead is incarnate in a rex or Caesar resident in a palace in London'.[36] The relations between a possessive and neurosis-inducing occupying army and a native people intent on blood sacrifice is figured by the 'legions' in 'Kinship'. At once a soldiery of the Roman Empire and the occupying forces of the British Army, they indulgently 'stare/ from the ramparts' at a 'mother ground' which is 'sour with the blood/ of her faithful' who 'lie gargling/ in her sacred heart'.

The narrative of invasion and occupation which informs this relationship is mythically rendered in the two poems of combat between Antaeus and Hercules which bracket Part I of *North* and in 'Bone Dreams', an Anglo-Saxon poem which splits the Viking verse and Bog poems in the volume. In 'Antaeus' which precedes the poetry of historical invasion, the dark, native Anataeus features in a myth of a pre-colonial Irish peasantry connected to roots and absorbed within a female and earth-orientated agrarian and mythological order: 'I am cradled in the dark that wombed me/ and nurtured in every artery/ Like a small hillock'. 'Hercules and Anataeus' which closes the narratives of colonialism in Part I provides a parable of Irish dispossession. The uprooting of the 'mould-hugger' Antaeus by the imperial male-power of the 'sky-born' Hercules serves as an allegory of an Anglo-Saxon Protestant partriarchal culture versed in the cerebral, the humanist and the technological, 'the challenger's intelligence/...a spur of light, a blue light', overpowering a Gaelic, matriarchal culture versed in the 'black powers' of the visceral, the agrarian and the pagan.

Like Finn in Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* Antaeus represents an image of Irish dispossession and homelessness, derivative of a mythology of the interred Celtic hero awaiting a second coming: 'lifts and banks Antaeus/ high as a profiled ridge/ a sleeping giant,/ pap for the dispossessed'. Heaney's commentary is ambiguous, pap is a hill, shaped as a teat, a racial inheritance to suck upon, but also something hollow or worthless. It represents a Celtic pagan imagery of the landscape, a sign of the telluric, mythological Ireland which has been historically sublimated.

'Bone Dreams' interpolates this Herculean conquest of the feminine back to an Anglo-Saxon and Roman conquest of a feminine, Celtic pagan ethic. An Anglo-Saxon masculinism is linguistically signalled in the 'the scop's/ twang, the iron/ flash of consonants/ cleaving the line'. But Ireland and England share a deeper, common cultural origin in a pre-Roman Celtic occupation of the landscape of the western islands of Europe. Heaney imagines the pre-Roman English topography as a woman's body, a Celtic earth goddess to whom the imprinted fertility god makes love: 'I am screes/ on her escarpments,/ a chalk giant/ carved upon her downs'. *He is probably the Cerne Abbas Giant reputed* to be the Celtic fertility deity Belinus. His fertilisation of a sacred feminine Celtic and neolithic ground precedes the masculine imperialism of the Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans, Christians and the English Elizabethans. As Annwn notes[37] the masculine chalk giant begins to dominate the land and his stance becomes actively marked: 'I have begun to pace/ the Hadrian's Wall/ of her shoulder' - the beginning of the masculinised cultural forms of subsequent imperialism which overlay the feminine pagan strata of prehistory.

Whereas 'Bone Dreams' is an interpolation of the moment of Hercules in Ireland, the four poems which draw Part I of *North* to a close are extrapolations. They constitute a series of meditations on the progress of Hercules in Ireland worked out in terms of a violent sexual metaphor, an imperial masculine rape of

and betrothal to a female Ireland which issues in the birth of the Loyalist Northern Ireland state. In the first of these poems, 'Ocean's Love to Ireland', the Englishman Ralegh's rape of the Irish maid acts as an emblem of an imperial masculine Elizabethan conquest of a feminine-oriented Ireland. The poem enlarges political conquest into a metaphysical mastery, the spirit of the Gaelic people, the Aisling, dissolves into an Irish nature: 'Rush-light, mushroom-flesh,/ She fades from their somnolent clasp/ Into ringlet-breath and dew'.

In 'Act of Union' England is 'still imperially/ Male', still geographically and politically dominating a womanly Ireland. The political Act of Union of 1800 is used to evolve the sexual metaphor of 'Ocean's Love to Ireland'. The political offspring of the Union is 'an obstinate fifth column' of intemperate tantrum-ridden Ulster Protestants who beat at borders with their 'parasitical/ And ignorant little fists'. The flood of 'Gifts of Rain' which characterises the apocaplytpic inundation of English colonisation is reworked as a metaphor for the catastrophe of an Ulster Protestant nativity, a Caesarian burst through the metaphysical walls of a dark Irish ground: 'As if the rain in bogland gathered head/ To slip and flood: a bog burst,/ A gash breaking open the ferny bed'. This is the shattering of an Irish native relationship to place, a wrecking of a native Irish metaphysics and of an Irish body politic: 'the rending process in the colony,/ The battering ram, the boom burst from within'.

The final poem of the sequence, 'The Betrothal of Cavehill', uses the trope of marriage to affirm the dominance of Protestant power in the province of Ulster which remains 'proud, protestant and northern, and male'. The poet remains betrothed to the sensual, vegetative bog which he retreats to for comfort and nourishment: 'The morning I drove out to bed me down/ Among my love's hideouts, her pods and broom'. An erotic, sensual, native betrothal to a tainted, bloodstained, maternal earth remains intact, neuroticised by a foreign imperialist betrothal.

The Artful Voyeur

The artistic scrutiny of a history of sectarian and imperial bloodletting raises questions about Heaney's artistic relations to Ulster violence and to tribe. Heaney's sympathy in 'Punishment'with the victimisation of the Windeby Girl in a modern Ulster context is compromised by his quietism, 'I...would have cast, I know,/ the stones of silence', and by the textual pleasures accruing from the observation and poetic inscription of the bog woman's exposed and brutalised body: 'I am the artful voyeur/ of your brain's exposed/ and darkened combs,/ your muscles webbing/ and all your numbered bones'. Heaney's artistic voyeurism is self-referentially signalled in 'The Grauballe Man'. Working from a photograph in P.V.Glob's text, *The Bog People* (Plate 9, p.38), 'I first saw his twisted face/ in a photograph/ head and shoulders/ out of the peat,/...now he lies/ perfected in my memory', Heaney invests Grauballe Man within the morphology of a molluscous, vegetable, paludal, protozoic, igneous, foetal nature: 'black river of himself', 'like bog oak', 'like a basalt egg', 'as a swan's foot/ or wet swamp root', 'ridge and purse of a mussel', 'an eel arrested/ under, a glisten of mud', 'a dark/ elderberry place', 'as a foetus's', 'like a forcep's baby'. Edna Longley discerns the 'air of a set-piece' in the poem, an almost dutiful moulding of the Grauballe Man in 'a chain of inventive similes'[38] which draws attention to the close aesthetic scrutiny and the linguistic moulding of the preserved victim in metaphor and simile.

The scrutiny of Grauballe Man provokes questions about corporeal violence and death and an exhibitionist art: 'Who will say 'corpse'/ to his vivid cast?/ Who will say 'body'/ to his opaque repose?'. In 'Strange Fruit' the poet's concern for a growing complacency in his feelings towards the bog people is registered by the reference to Diodorus Siculus, a Greek scholar of the first century BC, who, like Heaney, was concerned with history and 'confessed/

His gradual ease among the likes of this:/ Murdered, forgotten, nameless, terrible/ Beheaded girl'.[39] Heaney's troubled conscience declares a worrying inurement to what is humanistically shocking. The severed head's return gaze 'dispels any luxuriating complacency'[40] at inscribing her actuality into a poetic myth and prompts him to feel shame for his attempts to beatify her, at making blessed and reverential what is barbaric and pitiful, as he had beatified Tollund Man in *Wintering Out* whom he works in language to 'a saint's kept body'. 'I deified the man/ who rode there', he remembers in 'Kinship'.

Heaney's concern for an artistic voyeurism is compounded by the worrying knowledge of his own 'artful' public disclosure of tribal totem and taboo. The dark, prediluvian bog as a region of *otherness* in Irish life is mapped out in 'Bogland' by its marginal and unreclaimed status, 'Our unfenced country/ Is bog that keeps crusting/ Between the sights of the sun'. In 'Mossbawn', Heaney remembers that childhood geography was encoded by the values and angst of the rural Catholic community, recalling the mossland was 'forbidden ground' onto which he trespassed one summer as a boy:

> I believe my betrothal happened one summer evening... when another boy and myself stripped to the white country skin and bathed in a moss-hole, treading the liver-thick mud...coming out smeared and weedy and darkened...somehow initiated.[41]

Relationship to place from the very outset is conditioned by psychic disturbance constituted by a taboo landscape and vegetation protected by sacral signs and boundaries. His phallic penetration of the feminine bog represents his textual relations to the ground which represents a form of plunder of the forbidden. The hidden turf-spade in 'Kinship' occurs as an image of the artist's phallic writing instrument which he sinks carnally into the feminine bog as a condensed creative and fertility rite: 'a tawny rut/ opening at my feet/...the shaft wettish/ as I sank it upright'. His poetic represents an act of tribal transgression, stepping out of bounds to imbibe and disclose to public gaze hidden knowledges about the official culture, its rationales, legitimacies and psychic and social

stability: the 'cooped secrets/ of process and ritual'. In effect, he treads on the sacral ground of taboo, so displacing himself from family, community, tribe and locale.

The Note of Exile

'The Unacknowledged Legislator's Dream' is a fantasy about the dangers and the futility of being a tribal poet. Heaney features in the dream as a revolutionary liberator whose 'Wronged people cheer from the cages' as he launches an assault upon state bastions of power: 'I sink my crowbar in a chink under the masonry/ of state and statute, I swing on a creeper of secrets into the Bastille'. The poet himself is captured, imprisoned and notionally tortured before being emotionally disarmed by the commandant's mild-mannered solicitude: 'You'll be safer here, anyhow'. A humorous anxiety poem about exposing himself openly to the violent conflictual forces in his culture, the Catholic poet's ludicrous Tarzan-like heroism is rendered futile by the confident powers of the British state.

'Summer 1969' further dramatises the dilemma of the artist in a violent state. The Spanish poet, Lorca, and the Spanish painter, Goya, represent historical roles and precedents for the artist born into a violent history. Goya exemplifies the artist who confronts the violence by responding with the feeling of the tribe against the aggression, the bloodletting and the injustice of imperialist rule: 'He painted with his fists and his elbows, flourished/ The stained cape of his heart as history charged'. But Lorca, killed by the Civil Guarda in the Spanish Civil War, represents the dangers for the poet, a possible paradigm for Heaney as artist in Ulster witnessing RUC and Protestant brutality against his people in the Falls Road in 1969. 'Summer 1969', however, finds Heaney in Spain witnessing the RUC attacks on the Falls Road on TV. It represents again the voyeuristic and artistic distance of the poet from the centres

of violence. 'Neither Lorca nor Goya can be the model for a poet who feels himself, unavoidably, too withdrawn from events of the moment'.[42] 'Fosterage' finds an artistic mentor of Heaney's, Michael McLaverty, counselling a poetry of private will, constraint and patience: 'Listen, go your own way. Do your own work. Remember....that note of exile'.

1. Neil Corcoran, *Seamus Heaney*, p.89.

2. W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*, p.210.

3. Elmer Andrews, *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: All The Realms of Whisper*, p.63.

4. Seamus Heaney, '*North*: Seamus Heaney Writes...', *Poetry Book Society Bulletin*, 85 (Summer 1975).

5. Neil Corcoran, p.12.

6. Peter McClean, *Education, Ritual and Identity*, p.102.

7. Elmer Andrews, p.14.

8. Thomas C.Foster, *Seamus Heaney*, p.59.

9. Neil Corcoran, p.109.

10. *Fionn Mac Cool*, 'A Case in Point', *Irish Post,* 14 November 1992, p.6.

11. See Thomas C.Foster's *Seamus Heaney* for a fuller etymological analysis of 'North'.

12. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Granada (1982), p.228.

13. Seamus Heaney, 'Feeling into Words', in *Preoccupations*, pp.41-60 (p.44-5).

14. W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, p.128.

15. Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, p.79.

16. David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, p.144.

17. Dillon Johnstone, 'Kavanagh and Heaney', in *Irish Poetry After Joyce*, pp.121-66 (p.148).

18. David Annwn, *Inhabited Voices: Myth and History in the Poetry of Geoffrey Hill, Seamus Heaney and George Mackay Brown*, p.148.

19. 'Feeling into Words', p.58.

20. 'Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin', Faber Poetry Cassette (1983).

21. Faber Poetry Cassette.

22. P.V. Glob, *The Bog People*, p.103.

23. 'Feeling into Words', p.57.

24. Edna Longley, '*North*: "Inner Emigré" or "Artful Voyeur"?', in *The Art of Seamus Heaney*, pp.65-95 (p.79).

25. Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, '"Thinking of Her...As Ireland": Yeats, Pearse and Heaney', *Textual Practice*, 4 (1990), 1-20 (p.1).

26. Eavan Boland, Kaleidoscope, Radio 4, 23 October, 1992.

27. Eavan Boland, *Outside History*, p.45.

28. Cairns and Richards, p.145.

29. Matthew Arnold, *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, p.347.

30. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, p.7.

31. Anne Bernard, 'Creativity and Procreativity', *Crane Bag*, 4 (1980), 26-41 (p.31).

32. 'Creativity and Procreativity', p.37.

33. Richard Kearney, 'Myth and Motherland', in *Ireland's Field Day*, pp.61-80 (p.61).

34. Richard Kearney, p.78.

35. Many of the bog poems describe the mutilated or degraded heads of the sacrificial bog victims, issuing in the poet's own words as totems 'which sum up the whole Celtic pagan religion...the symbol of the severed head'. ('Feeling into Words', p.58).

36. 'Feeling into Words', p.57.

37. David Annwn, p.141.

38. Edna Longley, p.75.

39. Nicholas McGuinn, *Seamus Heaney*, p.94.

40. Elmer Andrews, p.97.

41. Seamus Heaney, 'Mossbawn', in *Preoccupations*, pp.17-27 (p.19).

42. Thomas C.Foster, p.76.

CHAPTER 7: A MIGRANT SOLITUDE

The brilliant 'Exposure' at the close of *North* very abruptly announces Heaney's relocation from Belfast, Ulster to Glanmore, County Wicklow in the Republic of Ireland: 'It is December in Wicklow'. Heaney joins a goodly number of Irish writers such as Wilde, Shaw, Joyce and O'Casey who have gone into exile, drained of sympathy and out of patience with the condition of Ireland. 'Exposure' is a meditation upon the poet's migration across the border to the Republic, the dilemma for the newly-uprooted Heaney resides in the conflicts between his duty to his poetry and to his people, to fear or favour his art, to fear or favour his tribe: 'As I sit weighing and weighing/ My responsible *tristia*./ 'For what? For the ear? For the people?/ For what is said behind-backs?'. Dripping rain produces symbolically accusatory voices of conscience which intimate betrayal and compromise: 'Mutter about let-downs and erosions'. But contrarily each crystal drop of rain 'recalls/ The diamond absolutes', emblems of the transparent, prismatic illumination of his art, as an aesthetic, as an epiphany, of self and of culture.

The poet's defence of his migrant status is anxiously declared in the negatives of neutrality: 'I am neither internee nor informer'. He is not a Republican activist but neither is he a betrayer of that cause, neither political patriot nor artistic apostate. More affirmatively, he claims he is 'An inner émigré, grown long-haired/And thoughtful', a man of contemplation rather than a man of action. He retreats from exposure to the public gaze in Ulster which expected him to say something about the public events of the North to camouflage himself amongst the greenery of the rural outback of the Republic,

like the wood-kernes portrayed in 'Bog Oak' in *Wintering Out* before the Elizabethan massacres: 'a wood-kerne/ Escaped from the massacre./ Taking protective colouring/ From bole and bark, feeling/ Every wind that blows'. The imagery sustains his status as a Gaelic or Irish outlaw, an exile preparing for further resistance, suggests Corcoran.

Yet Heaney has a deeper anxiety about the unrealised potential of poetry within Ulster which is projected onto the imagery of the comet 'that was lost' which 'Should be visible at sunset'. The sudden appearance of comets in the skies have always played an important role in astrological prognostications, cited, for example, as portents of misfortune in Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part I*: 'Comets importing change of times and states/ Brandish your crystal tresses to the sky/ And with them scourge the bad revolting stars/ That have consented unto Henry's death'.[1] As Shakespeare's text illustrates, the word *comet* is derived from the Greek *kometes* meaning literally 'the long-haired one' but was probably first coined by the Egyptians who called a comet 'a hairy star' represented by an ideographic hieroglyph similar to their sky-goddess, Nut, her long-female tresses characterising the streaming tail.[2] This archetypal feature of the goddess associated with the comet appears in *Wintering Out* as the poet prepares to engage with the unconscious life. In 'Toome' Heaney transforms himself into a Celtic Other, 'elvers tail my hair', a primitive, archaic image of the Gael and the Celtic Medusa. In 'Gifts of Rain', the pouring rain represents the flood of Gaelic language coursing through the Mossbawn landscape in terms of feminine tresses: 'all spouts by daylight/ brimmed with their own airs/ and overflowed each barrel/ in long tresses', and again in the sleeping 'Maighdean Meara' the submerged Celtic goddess: 'She sleeps now, her cold breasts/ Dandled by undertow,/ Her hair lifted and laid...This is the first great sleep/ Of homecoming'. In 'Toome' and these other poems, Heaney is reclaiming a

feminine, prediluvian and illiterate self in the face of official parochial Catholic and imperial English discourses.

Now in 'Exposure', Heaney asserts that he has 'grown long-haired', and in a notable and politically exacting discursive and literary analogy Terry Eagleton argues that the dirty, 'rat-haired' Heatchliffe of *Wuthering Heights* who speaks 'gibberish' represents a dark, Irish otherness located within the pale of English civilisation.[3] The implication is that the comet of the 'long-haired' Heaney may portend a post-Imperial as well as post-colonial knowledge, a pulsing rose out on a 500 hundred year orbit, which is about to loop back into the universe of consciousness and reappear over the skies of Ulster. It may portend the return of the English/British repressed only comprehendable by a mythological feminine Celtic principle embedded in an anti or post-colonial consciousness. In the event, he misses the sighting: 'Who, blowing up these sparks/ For their meagre heat, have missed/ The once-in-a-lifetime portent./ The comet's pulsing rose'. Trying to get some heat from his Wicklow surroundings, he aspires to some inspiration, in possession of grievous reservations about having, in fact, *betrayed a poetic calling. In former times the comet was* popularly understood to signify a punishment or a scourging, a sign of the demonic as the *Henry IV* quotation notifies. The torturing thought for the poet is that he has not delivered, as T.S. Eliot does in his narrative of redemption, his fire sermon.[4] The best of the Ulster poetic narrative may have been yet to come. Has he betrayed his poetic calling rather than protected it? Not only his people but also his poetry betrayed?

The Shadow Self

Field Work exhibits a dialectic of the uprooted man, concerned with the cultural anxiety of the *inner émigré* whose status within the nation has become increasingly questionable. On the one hand there is an uncertain, decentred self

located in a new locale, on the other hand a reaching back to the native place of Mossbawn and native ideologies, the anchoring points of his earlier existence. 'After a Killing' suggests a form of deracination on the island of his birth, informed by his solitary role as a survivor-poet in the expansive geography of Ireland, between Brandon in the south-west and Dunservick on the Antrim coast: 'In that neuter original loneliness/ From Brandon to Dunservick/ I think of small-eyed survivor flowers,/ The pined for, unmolested orchid'.

'At the Water's Edge' shows a discomforted Heaney islanded amidst the waters of Lough Erne in County Fermanagh contemplating in detached mood the corrosive Irish historical experience. Echoing the language symbolism of 'A Backward Look'(*WO*), the snipe's residence on Devenish prescribes the marginal status of bird and Gaelic language preserved in the Gaelteacht, linguistic conservation sites, while the island's custodian utters laments for the passing of the past: 'The keeper's recital of elegies/ Under the tower'. On Devenish, the poet surveys the erosions of Catholic icons of Irish faith, 'Carved monastic heads/ Were crumbling like bread on water', and on Boa the icons of pagan fertility worship, 'the god-eyed, sex-mouthed stone/...Answered my silence with silence'. The deserted cottage on Horse Island with its 'cold hearthstone' appears an ambiguous representation, on the one hand a cooling taking place at the very heart of the Irish historical culture, on the other hand a cooling within Heaney. Reminiscent of the ashes he stokes in the fire in 'Exposure', he is found here, too, struggling to strike the 'fire in the flint'.[5]

Taking new bearings within a displaced geographical centre, the uprooted poet initially reaches back for images and symbols from childhood which have previously acted in his poetry as natal, anchoring points of identity. 'A Drink of Water' acts as a form of rededication to the feminine creative and life-giving force centred in Mossbawn upon the water-pump, Heaney's Irish *omphalos*. 'The Strand at Lough Beg' takes the murdered Colum McCartney

back to Heaney's home ground for the laying-out ritual of the body, embellishing his shroud with 'plaits of/ Green scapulas'. Speaking in the proprietary voice of a resentful native, 'The Toome Road' stakes the strongest claim to his originary ground, accusingly asking of the invader 'How long were they approaching down my roads/ As if they owned them?'. Rather like the Ballybeg 'private core' which Yolland recognises is unavailable to him as an Englishman, the poet proffers the *omphalos* as an invulnerable spiritual native centre that cannot be vanquished: 'O charioteers, above your dormant guns,/ It stands here still, stands vibrant as you pass,/ The invisible, untoppled omphalos'. It represents a racial centre that holds, a cultural hinterland that endures, a place that still catalyses Heaney's emotions.

At the sound of the army patrol helicopters heard on Horse Island in 'At The Water's Edge', Heaney resists the native impulse to immolation which then invigorates thoughts of his own initiatory political rite, a 'march in Newry' as 'a protest against the thirteen killings on Bloody Sunday, 30 January, 1972'[6] in which Ulster Catholics marched in defiance of a watchful colonialist militarism. Sentiments of a green nationalism recur in the early part of the text: the nausea the poet feels through the association of oysters ('Oysters') with imperialist plunder; the hatching of two IRA gunmen in the Irish hillsides in 'After a Killing' - reputedly that of Christopher Ewart Biggs, British Ambassador to Ireland - intent on fulfilling the dreams of their forebears for a wholly Irish nation, 'As if the unquiet founders walked again'; the ritual blessing of Colum McCartney's body with 'plaits of/ Green scapulas' which suggestively combines a Dantesque pagan Catholicism with a renascent Irish nationalism, the 'rushes that shoot green again'; the celebration of Sean O'Riada in 'In Memoriam Sean O'Riada' cast in the guise of an Irish 'drover' ushering the Ulster culture towards the milieu of the Republic, 'herding them south', and expanded to an

image of an Irish musical Jacobite: 'he was our jacobite/ he was our young pretender/ who marched along the deep'.

Yet the closest of all intimate identifications with his originary community and its violent activity occurs in 'The Badgers'. Heaney has explained '"The Badgers" are a kind of analogue for IRA activity'[7] as Foster elucidates:

> Heaney makes clear the connection between badgers and terrorists, they make their runs 'under the night', make their presence known by 'carcasses' they leave in their wake, and 'One that grew notorious/ lay untouched in the roadside'.[8]

The badger is an emblem of that which is produced as alien in official discourse: the darkness of violence and barbarism in what is considered to be the illegitimate life as opposed to the ideological legitimacy of the enlightened peace of democratic society. But Heaney refutes such simplistic polarities acknowledging the social 'Other' within himself and within the 'family' of the Ulster Catholic community:

> Cool from the sett and redolent
> of his runs under the night,
> the bogeys of fern country
> broke cover in me
> for what he is:
> pig family
> and not at all what he is painted.

Heaney comments that the poem is ultimately about 'the relationship between yourself and the shadowy self; the question of political solidarity with a movement becomes an extension of that'.[9] The currents of sympathy in the Ulster Catholic structure of feeling with the violent fight for full Irish independence is a shadowy desire living beneath the acceptable surfaces of the 'civilised self'. As Andrews puts it 'The poet becomes civilised man confronting the atavisms of "unaccomodated man"'[10], a paired otherness within Ulster Catholic identity. This returns Heaney to the uncertainties of 'Exposure'. This confrontation is a matter of artistic and self-integrity as he reveals in the rhetorical question 'How perilous is it to choose/not to love the life we're

shown?'. Andrews concludes that violence and terror are 'part of his ancestry and dispossession' which 'co-exist with an inheritance of sturdiness, intelligence and endurance'[11] as the close of the poem submits: 'His sturdy dirty body/ and interloping grovel./ The intelligence in his bone'. Resistance to internal Ulster and broader British oppression, potentially violent in its form, has honourable traditions and arguable legitimacies which in the humanist Heaney are consigned to the shadow world of the self.

The Door into the Light

The darkness of a poetic embroiled in conflict within Ulster is in a dialectical relationship in *Field Work* with signs of light. In this volume, sea, light, day and summer constitute a symbolic structure, Utopian in its impulse, which represents the regenerative, freeing, potential of an art of the quotidian and the domestic in the Republic of Ireland. It is placed against the art of the historical, the earth, the dark, the night and winter which has served as symbolic structure in *Wintering Out* and *North* for the distressing violence in the Ulster province. The desire to change radically tone and texture is spoken of overtly by Heaney in a letter he wrote to Brian Friel on the completion of *North:*

> I no longer wanted a door into the dark, I wanted a door into the light...to be able to use the first person singular to mean *me* and my lifetime.[12]

The imagery of light is dispersed throughout the first part of the volume, the 'clear light' of coastal sea and sky in 'Oysters', the 'Broad window light' on the coastal walk in 'After a Killing', the naming of Sean O'Riada as a 'minnow of light'. The appetite for a poetry of the light is played out in *Field Work* through a symbolic imagery of fish and fishing which have served hithertofore as a symbolic imagery of unconscious and dangerous, chthonic forces. The atavistic appetites which conducted his people and his hungry art through a door into the dark are now countered in *Field Work* by a civilising impulse which seeks to

moderate and refine the appetites of self and art and conduct the poet through a door into a quotidian light.

The oysters fished out of the seas in 'Oysters' evoke thoughts of sexual and Roman imperialist plunder commensurate with the mythological gender patterns of British imperialism of a female Ireland: 'Over the Alps, packed deep in hay and snow,/ The Romans hauled their oysters south to Rome'. But Heaney now wants to resist a poetic too exclusively based on these appetites. In order to vitalise feelings of a pleasuring artistic liberation from such dark meditations, the poet endeavours to feast his senses on the symbolically ahistorical, quotidian light of the coast: 'I ate the day/ Deliberately, that its tang/ Might quicken me all into verb, pure verb'. In the coastal light of 'After a Killing' Heaney takes nourishment from the freshly-caught fish and freshly-picked produce: 'You walk twenty yards/ To the boats and buy mackerel./ And...new potatoes,/ Three tight green cabbages and carrots/ With the tops and mould still fresh on them'. The mould on the carrots, the mackerel from the sea, is nutritious food culled from the dark ground and the deep seas which were the dangerous and atavistic realms of the unconscious life, now purified by the clear coastal light and the sybilline salesgirl.

Nevertheless, the poet is discovering the persistence of what in an essay upon Yeats, Heaney has spoken of as the 'sinister appetites'[13] of the poet. The pull between sinister and purgative desires is witnessed in the fishing poems of 'Casualty' and of 'In Memoriam Sean O'Riada' where the poet out fishing the coastal waters proclaims 'I tasted freedom with him/ To get out early, haul/ Steadily off the bottom,/ Dispraise the catch, and smile/ As you find a rhythm/ Working you'. This creative plenty is fashioned in the image of the musician as a 'gannet smacking through scales'. The gannet images the gluttonous, indigenous appetite, artistic and political, the mackerel symbolises the appeasing

of those hungers. O'Riada embodies the profligate artistic and political appetites of the Ulster Catholic at the cultural nexus of art and politics.

In these elegies the appetite for a poetry of the light is repeatedly mitigated by a masculinist Yeatsian poetic. Drover, falconer, Jacobite, O'Riada exhibits Yeatsian qualities of mastery, control and leadership that can both rouse and direct a people. But such a poetic appears increasingly inappropriate to a poet who has exiled himself from the site of political intensity. The 'Glanmore Sonnets' note the attempt to move away from a Yeatsian cultural poetics towards a pastoral aestheticism which Heaney associates with a Wordsworthian romanticism. The central, lyrical sequence represents the continuing effort to write a lighter, lyrical form of poetry through the medium of the sonnet.

Purging the Dark

The 'Glanmore Sonnets' placed at the centre of *Field Work* focus the manner in which the volume involves a negotiation of the poet's migration from Ulster to the Republic. Heaney's 'Glanmore Sonnets' (1979) and Friel's *Translations* (1980) each offer an imaginative framing of location in the Republic, pastoral Glanmore and mythical Ballybeg. Dispossessed and displaced they respond by mapping and mythicising landscapes across the border in the Irish Republic. Textually, the articulation of Glanmore as a terrain of culture is initiated by the visual layout of the text's cover. The jacket of the first edition reproduces a section of a large-scale map which is illustrative of Heaney's preoccupation with the land and his sense of Irish place. The 'frame' and the 'field' of the relief map constitute the dominant spatial imagery, preparing the way for a cultural and poetic image of the geographical landscape which Heaney develops in the sonnets. Place maintains its significance as a space of identity for the subject. The poems work the Glanmore locale, investing it in a discourse which seeks to re-root the poet in unfamiliar ground.

The sequence is constructed around the central metaphor nominated by the title of the volume, the poet as pastoral field worker recalling the contrasting era of *Wintering Out* where the poet sought to root himself in his originary ground. The conceit of field work structures the first two sonnets, language is ploughed into the rural world which the sonnet frames: 'Each verse returning like the plough turned round'. Behind the image of the poet-as-ploughman lies an informing passage on Wordsworth's methods of composition in Heaney's essay 'The Makings of A Music': 'Wordsworth...to-ing and fro-ing like a ploughman up and down a field'.[14] Wordsworth's description of the poetic process which complements the contemplation - 'The hiding places of my mind/ Seem open' - finds its way into Heaney's poetry:

> Sensings, mountings from the hiding places,
> Words entering almost the sense of touch
> Ferreting themselves out of their dark hutch

The pastoralised fields of Glanmore and the language field of the sonnet constitute an internal perceptual terrain of Heaney's fertile poetic sensibility: 'My lea is deeply tilled/ Old ploughsocks gorge the subsoil of each sense'. In turning over the subsoil of the sense Heaney is giving his sensibility a thorough airing, allowing his overtaxed senses to ventilate and purify themselves of the dark taint, like the black *O* of *Broagh* or the 'dark watermark' of 'The Seed Cutters' which tattoos the land and sensibility of the mid-Ulster Catholic. The mature 'elderberry blooms' in the fifth sonnet rework the knowledges of suffering and violence with which the Irish Catholic psyche is imbued, made apparent by the descriptive condition of the elderberries as 'caviar of shot/ A buoyant spawn, a light bruised out of purple'. In the syntagmatic plane of Heaney's poetry, the language refers to the visceral, erotic and necrophile knowledges: 'spawn' is the frightening sign of the nascent knowledges of 'Death of a Naturalist', the 'windy boortrées' refer back to 'Broagh' which sounds a mid-Ulster tribalism, the 'dark/ elderberry place' is resonant of the Grauballe Man's death wound.

Later sonnets register the emotional clearing of signs of Ulster darkness from the poet's sensibility in metaphorical dramas of rites of passage in the passing of a train, the clearance of a weather depression, the disappearance of a rat, the passing of a Donegal night. The impending darkness of the thunderstorm's approach in sonnet eight is charged with sexual and creative import: 'At body heat and lush with omen', but the atmosphere is also weighted with the threat of violence, 'What welters through this dark hush on the crops?'. Despite the sight of the ill-omened magpie the poem does not issue in a revelation of violence but here in the Republic's summer resolves in a poem of sexual and creative tension and release in the realms of the domestic and personal: 'Come to me quick, I am upstairs shaking./ My all of you birchwood in lightening'.

The 'black rat/ [who] Sways on the briar like infected fruit' amidst the self-deprecating bucolic classicism of the ninth sonnet, 'We have our burnished bay tree at the gate,/ Classical', also reawakens images of the dark, visceral erotic death - drives prepared for in the early volumes and confronted in *North*, a vision which is iconically represented in the fruit-like rot of the Roum's decapitated head in 'Strange Fruit'. This evokes again a troubling question about the poet's withdrawal from Ulster climes. 'What is my apology for poetry?' returns Heaney to his reasons for departure, that is to honour the muse and to honour his art. The sentiment purges the briar of the rat: 'The empty briar is swishing/ When I come down, and beyond, your face/ Haunts like a new moon glimpsed through tangled glass'. The 'swishing' suggests the echo of a certain kind of masochistic guilt over his abandonment of Ulster. It is as though he could say 'taunts' instead of haunts. The appearance of a refreshed vision of the feminine face of his wife, imprinted with a sliver of moon, enacts a rite of renewal for a new phase of family and poetic life. It represents a divesting of strangeness and a customising of the self to a more family-centred

bourgeois state of being. The poet now looks into a mirror lightly, the new moon rising through a dark mirror of tangled vegetation.

The pattern of clearance is indicative of the ritual drama of the dark night of the soul. In an interview with John Haffenden Heaney has said that 'Spiritually I felt terrifically steadied'.[15] The controlling imagery in the sonnet sequence is that of Glanmore as sanctuary, an antithesis to the poem 'No Sanctuary' in *Wintering Out* which sees the poet staring into the fiery red dog's eyes of the Hallowe'en death mask symbolising the reawakened atavistic energies within Ulster society. Tree-house, hedge-school, harbour, Sabine farm construct Glanmore's characteristic hue as a place of rest and relief for the Ulster poet 'escaped from the massacre'. The sonnets refract a ritual purgation in which the disturbing, intrusive thoughts of Ulster violence are laundered out of the sensibility in order that the poet can rehabilitate himself in a poetic embedded in the quotidian, domestic, private life of Glanmore.

The Poetry of the Light

In seeking a door into the light Heaney needs must put behind him the mythic imagery of *North* which acknowledges the light as symbolic of values and meanings constructed historically by a dominant imperialist culture. In 'The White Mythologies' Derrida speaks of the way in which the 'heliotropic metaphor'[16] links the light of the sun to the light of the mind rhetorically to elevate and revere the faculties of reason, knowledge, cerebral intelligence and enlightenment, an 'idealising metaphor'[17] which naturalises and justifies notions of civilisation and progress within western discourse. Having enunciated in *North* the defeat of the native Antaeus, the 'mould-hugger' rooted in 'the black powers of earth', by Hercules, the 'sky-born' who is 'a spur of light', in *Field Work* there is a tendency for Heaney to enter into the light of a lyrical pastoralism orientated towards a Herculean ethic.

In the sonnet sequence Heaney works with the same image of the hedge-school as Friel exploits in *Translations*, 'Then I landed in the hedge-school of Glanmore'. In mapping the Irish terrain, both Friel and Heaney confront Irish life through a post-Enlightenment English Romanticism, the Wordsworthian Yolland in Ballybeg and the Wordsworthian Heaney in Glanmore. The outcomes, however, are very different: Frielian rejection through the demise of Yolland's idealising sentimentality contrasts with Heaney's tentative assimilation of Wordsworth into his own poetic.

In the third of the sonnets, Heaney's Romanticism is given an added Wordsworthian complexion by the self-deprecating comparison between poet and his wife at Glanmore and Dorothy and William Wordsworth at Rydal Mount. Although this hyperbole is deflated by his wife's demurral, the poem finishes with a Wordsworthian flourish:

> Dorothy and William'- She interrupts:
> 'You're not going to compare us two...?
> Outside a rustling and twig-combing breeze
> Refreshes and relents. Is cadences.

The imagery of sentient nature characterises the flux of the creating mind inspired and fortified by the rural location.

English Romanticism in Heaney's sonnet sequence is nonetheless tracked by a self-deprecatory note which disallows it to stand with any authority. While Heaney invokes a Romantic and Classical order of poetry, it is qualified with an imagery of an Irish literary vocabulary and an Irish experience. Yeats, Friel and Joyce are referenced through the emblems of the 'fundamental unblown rose' which arouses thoughts of the freakish spring snows of Easter 1916, the hedge-school which initiates knowledges about Sweeney/Heaney Astray, and the blood-boltered road of a twentieth century Irish history, respectively.

The symbolic world of an Irish nature is freighted with a troubled history. In the bird life which emblematises the situating of the self in

Glanmore landscape there is a destablising sub-text, the 'cuckoo', an alien visitant which is possibly the incomer Heaney or the colonial upstart, consorts with the 'corncrake', an indigenous species of bird, native to the locale. In the memory of a story-teller in Heaney's youth, the child is excited by the story-teller who is characterised as 'a wild goose/ Heard after dark above the drifted house'. As an heroic trope of defenders and émigrés of Ireland, the wild geese is an image which potentially underlies Heaney's own present condition, a 'wood-kerne' who has 'escaped the massacre'. Instead of a door into the light, the Irish landscape continues to provide the would-be Irish Romanticist with a dangerous door into the dark.

This is the retrospective issue that Heaney raises in *Station Island*. Heaney writes twice about the death of his cousin Colum McCartney, once in the elegy 'The Strand at Lough Beg' in *Field Work*, and for a second time in the seventh and eighth stations of 'Station Island' in which the dead man chastises the poet for glossing over the ugliness of his death. When Heaney looks into the water of Lough Beg in the seventh station, it features as a pastoral mirror incapable of reflecting MacCartney's violent death, 'I had come to the edge of the water,/ soothed by just looking, idling over it/ as if it were a clear barometer/ or a mirror, when his reflection/ did not appear'. MacCartney comes back to haunt Heaney and inculpate him for the way in *Field Work* 'you whitewashed ugliness and drew/ the lovely blinds of the *Purgatorio*/ and saccharined my death with morning dew'.

Heaney has said that the elegy 'resurrects the dead one in a benign landscape and makes the dead walk again in a beautiful freed way'.[18] This is the aesthetic and emotive language of lyricism explicit to the poetry of the light in *Field Work*. The poem in 'Station Island' is one of self-accusation in which 'the mystifications of the art, the sweetness of lyric is refused. It is sullen against lyric sweetness. It tries to put the boot into the lyric'.[19] This returns

Heaney to that unliterary aspect of himself, 'the thick-witted refuser of consolation process', redressing the balance of being over-literary in his *Field Work* poems. He confesses 'You should simply record that this guy was probably shot by Protestant paramilitaries'.[20] as Colum McCartney does in the eighth station: 'The Protestant who shot me through the head/ I accuse directly'.

Reapprochement With Wife

One specific area that the poet revisits in a search for an alternative ethic which will not confound his new poetic is the ground of the feminine. 'Summer Home' in *Wintering Out* registers the estrangement between husband and wife in Heaney's marriage as an infestation whose source is in a corrupted feminine principle: 'wind off the dumps/ or something in heat/ dogging us, the summer gone sour/ a fouled nest incubating somewhere'. The masculine in culture on political heat for the feminine earth infects relations in culture and in marriage. It is a narrative the poet works through in *North* in the rites of passage in relation to the bog goddess. Now in *Field Work* Heaney seeks a reapprochement with the feminine at private and public levels, though it is effected most overtly in the poetry in the changing relations with his wife.

The struggle between light and dark is played out in the symbolic metamorphosis of the feminine muse who watches over Heaney's poetry. 'A Drink of Water' represents a rededication to the originary sources of his poetry, the old woman, a form of Sean Bhean Bhoct, who taking water from the pump, the *omphalos*, in the Mossbawn yard connotes those diminishing resources: 'Faithful to the admonishment on her cup./ *Remember the Giver* fading off the lip'. 'Like an old bat', she represents the wizened and wisened Heaney who has dispensed with the journey through the dark of his Ulster culture. The move to the Republic demands a different muse whom Heaney locates in the figure of the Sybil, a prophet-priestess of Apollo to whom the *omphalos* in Delphi was

dedicated. Elmer Andrews proposes that it is the Sybil rather than the dark mother who presides over *Field Work*: 'Heaney's muse is no longer the mythological goddess of Irish history, the implacable 'black mother'. Instead he develops the idea of the domestic muse or sibyl'.[21] This muse appears again as the young country girl in 'After a Killing' and the young girl in white in 'Guttural Muse'.

The later poems of *Field Work* reflect the changing public relations to the feminine in their dramatisation of a reconciliation with the female at the personal level. Heaney has called the 'Field Work' series 'more domestic poems',[22] while Seamus Deane sees the sequence as 'a ripening of the love relationship'[23] and Foster as 'the delight to be found in mature, erotic love'.[24] 'September Song', which marks the departure from Glanmore to Dublin, uses the first-person plural to characterise identity, 'we' and 'our' rather than the first-person singular, 'I', which characterises the isolate poet of 'Exposure' on the arrival at Glanmore.

'The Otter' and 'The Skunk' celebrate the physicality and sensuality of the poet's wife, in the former an 'Otter of memory/...Heavy and frisky in your freshened pelt' and in the latter 'the intent and glamorous,/ Ordinary, mysterious skunk'. 'Polder' records the reconciliatory calm after the emotional storm, 'After the sudden outburst and the squalls/ I hooped you with my arms'. The repossession of his wife is canvassed in the poem through the conceit of 'polder', low-lying land 'reclaimed' from the sea ('salty grass and mud-slick banks'). Heaney's anthropomorphising sexuality is stimulated 'like an old willow/ I stir a little on my creel of roots'. Sexuality and landscape coincide again and raises to mind the mythic conceptions of Ireland of *North*. But this time the imagery of landscape and roots is sublimated into his private, emotional relations: a symbolic, emotional landscape rather than a physical, historical landscape, he is re-rooting himself in the personal and the familial.

Although his feelings for his wife are charged with affection, the sensuality surrounding the zoomorphised female and the regard for his wife's clothing, signify an enduring and troubling objectification and fetishisation of the female. In The Otter' and 'The Skunk', the zoomorphic appearance and eroticised clothing make up his wife's femininity, her sexuality cloaked and represented in the otter's and the skunk's gestures and appearances. In the 'Field Work' sequence the poet appears as a voyeur emblematising his poetic gaze in the 'pefect eye' of the nesting blackbird, the subject of his gaze, his wife. He self-consciously invests his wife in the discourse of nature by rubbing his wife's hand with leaf and mould: 'I anoint the anointed/ leaf-shape'. The vaccination mark transforms to birth mark stained the umber colour of the sunflower, a discursive translation of his wife through the poet's dreaming mind, 'stained/ to perfection'. In dramatising himself in poet-as-husband role, he is very self-consciously inscribing his wife into a symbolic poetic discourse. The authorship of his wife is based on observation and naturalist representation. The wife remains essentially silent and excluded, her internality, her emotionality, her fleshly body, essentially absent.

The image of his wife-cum-otter 'Printing the stones' with the wetness of her footsteps in 'Otter' constitutes a substitute or shadowy female presence. The woman's mark is displaced by the poet onto the landscape, signing her as nature, whereas Heaney's male print is in the poem, on the page, signing him as culture. Unwittingly, Heaney constructs the male cultural power which signs the woman as nature, deculturalising and depersonalising her in the process. It is noteworthy that Heaney appears in 'The Skunk', too, as a man of culture sat at the desk in his study where he is teacher-in-residence at Berkeley University, California, 'composing love-letters again', while his wife remains a distant object of male desire. Although Heaney's wife is central to the artistic production she is peripheral as a person. She is symbolic rather than literal,

serving the art and craft of Heaney. The poet as field worker labours to contain his wife within a conservative male structure of feeling, an aestheticised beloved.

As Spivak comments in 'Imperialism and Difference', the 'poet-operating-as-controlling subject on the woman-as sign'[25] does not disappear as a result of decolonisation. The implication is that Heaney's naturing of the female is a displacement of female physicality through participation in the repressive discourse of the 'civilised' patriarchal ego which elsewhere the poet might question. Claire Willis has referred to Medh McGuckian, a Northern Irish female poet and contemporary of Heaney's, to exemplify the way in which women writers are able to take issue with dominant cultural values and discourse within which Heaney is writing in *Field Work.* McGuckian labours to introduce from a woman's position 'the concerns of the private domestic sphere into the public discourses of literature'.[26] *Venus in the Rain* enacts a psychological and physical drama of confinement and release, from the marital home and from cultural definitions of femininity. The major imagery of the volume is the house, the main tropes are doors and windows which are open or closed, entered or departed as McGuckian seeks to escape the prohibitive sexual, marital and cultural definitions of femininity and inhabit an autonomous identity.

In the 'The Princess of Parallelograms' McGuckian stalks female icons of romantic discourse conveying the denials involved for the 'damsel' and 'princess' in socially playing romantic roles: 'Who, denied her own dreams/ So she could enter/ The stainless dreams of others'.[27] This last commentary is an antithesis to Heaney's own dream incorporation of the woman 'stained/ to perfection' having inscribed her within a purifying discourse of nature. Like Eavan Boland, McGuckian is challenging the representations of women but also the kind of familism, the praise for private family and house life, which Heaney is entering into during his residence in the gate-lodge at Glanmore.

The Poet in the Market-Place

The Glanmore ground is most fully constructed out of metaphors from the literary sphere. Hence the locale is successively framed as Irish rural farm, hedge-school, Rydal Mount, tree-house, harbour, Classical rural sanctuary. But the Glanmore map on the cover of the first edition reveals aspects of the landscape not countenanced by the poet: Glanmore Castle and the expansive grounds testify to a historical colonisation which is putatively Norman and Tudor and bound up with an Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. Furthermore, the gate-house lodge in which Heaney resides can be seen in terms of economic and social relations suppressed by Heaney's poetry of the light. The owner of the lodge is the Canadian academic, Anne Saddlemeyer. As Morrison notes that 'Ann Saddlemeyer's loan of the Wicklow gate-lodge is like Mæcenas' gift of the Sabine farm to Horace'.[28]

It could be argued that Heaney has through these constructions and suppressions created Glanmore as a civilised and conservative bourgeois space. He has cut himself off from the knowable community and retreated from his previous engagement with the political violence of Ulster. Hence the evocation of the gate-lodge at Glanmore as a bourgeois habitat where he can anchor his private emotional and marital life. He has from this perspective become socially liberal, working in isolation in a secured property in a country retreat, using the pastoral materials of a conservative tradition to construct a conservative identity. This calls to mind Edward Said's evaluation of Raymond William s works: 'Property, as Williams demonstrates with extraordinary skill, authorises schemes, establishes discourses, founds ideologies, many of them leading back to the earth'.[29] Heaney's representation of the rural runs somewhat counter to Friel's intent, for example, in *The Communication Cord*, which deconstructs the pastoral mythos and engages pejoratively with the Republic's bourgeois values

and the languages, myths and romanticism surrounding property, or again in *Making History* which raises to view the pastoral discourses of the English sixteenth-century country-estate out of which imperialist ideologies of the civilian and barbarian emerged.

Desmond Fennel in 'Whatever You Say Say Nothing: Why Seamus Heaney is No.1' has impugned Heaney for his collusion with academic liberal and consumer market-place values embedded within an English and American cultural hegemony: 'The academy-schools and universities alike- has modern poetry by the throat. The market for books is now pre-eminently academic'.[30] Jones and Schmidt in their Introduction to *British Poetry Since 1970: A Critical Survey* remark upon the sociological trend for poets to be located within the pedagogic and critical institutions and structures: 'The Seventies were years in which the academy ingested contemporary poets and poetry with a real appetite...poetry has become the prerogative of academics'[31] and go onto explain that poets have been increasingly drawn into 'a competitive trade within a market'.[32] Fennel directs attention to the role of poet as profession and career and Heaney's own success in his chosen professional field: 'the poet must actively manage his career, with particular attention to the fact that we live, as we are so often told, in an age of public relations and mass communications, and in a free-market economy. Heaney has done this well'.[33] He goes on to catalogue what he sees as a compact between Heaney, the poet and the cultural/economic institutions and schemas, publishing through Faber of London, earning plaudits and monetary rewards through literary honours and prizes made by high culture establishments in England and America, taking up academic posts in overseas universities.

Fennel's criticism has been seen as somewhat jaundiced but he does profile the contemporary narrative of capitalist culture and economy which assimilates the individual at conscious and unconscious levels. Heaney's

geographical sojourns in Ulster and the Irish Republic have a distinct pattern which coincide with his educational and literary movements: Mossbawn where he attended Anahorish Primary School (-12), Derry where he boarded at St Columb's College (12-18), Belfast where he attended and taught at a succession of educational institutions including Queen's University (19-32), Glanmore in the Republic working as a freelance poet (33-37) and then to Dublin where he resumed teaching as a full-time member of the English Department at Carysfort Teacher Training College, before teaching more diversely in Ireland, America and England, including an appointment as Boylton Professor of Oratory and Rhetoric at Harvard and election as Professor of Poetry at Oxford University. The latter poems of *Field Work* are indicative of a cosmopolitan rather than the rooted lifestyle which Heaney celebrates in the 'Glanmore Sonnets'. While 'September Song' remembers the leave-taking from Belfast for Ulster and the leave-taking from Glanmore to Dublin four-years later, several of the poems that follow signal the internationalist life of the poet. 'Leavings' finds the poet driving through England, 'High Summer' takes as its subject a family holiday in France, 'The Otter' takes its cue from a holiday in Tuscany, Italy, and 'The Skunk' locates Heaney as teacher-in-residence at Berkeley University in California.

In accusing Heaney of neglecting the essentials of an Ulster culture, Fennel charges the poet with supplying a cultish English and American academic puritanism with confessional poems of the agonised and guilt-ridden self assailed by civil violence. This form of poetry, he suggests, found concord with the desire on English syllabuses for the brief, well-crafted, lyric poem and the desires of a free-market consumer capitalism for an individualist and political aesthetic. This comment directly impinges on the kind of poetic Heaney is promoting in *Field Work* from the locale of a country-lodge provisioned by a Canadian academic and requires a re-reading of poems such as 'An Afterwards'.

Here Heaney figures a Dantean punishment for the poet's earthly wrongdoings chief of which is his ambition for public stature and fame and neglect of familial and domestic obligations. 'My sweet, who wears the bays/ In our green land above...?', the damned poet inquires of his wife. From Fennel's position such a poem may express the displaced angst of a poet who has opted for a commercial, bourgeois form of fame and success against the more dangerous habitation within an Ulster political and poetic framework. An agnostic critical reading of the subsequent 'Field Work' might interpret the 'coin long gazed at/ brilliant on the *Pequod's* mast' not only as a representation of Heaney's refurbished marital romanticism but, through its reference to Melville's *Moby Dick*, as a sign of the economic diversions engendered in the quest for the elusive white whale which symbolises the spiritual quest for 'the ungraspable phantom of life'.[34]

The Camera Obscura

This drama of the suppression of the values and privilege of the forms of modernity in which Heaney is positioned as citizen and poet would be most obviously apparent in 'Oysters', the opening poem of *Field Work*. Heaney is once again in the car, a modern bourgeois man driving with friends through a pastoralised rural landscape and eating out in a tourist setting. The glut of privilege might be construed as pertaining to that of Heaney's party as much as to Roman imperial appetites, bound up with the modern consumer ethics of desire, demand and despoliation. The car journeys of the modern poet away from home sign the reconstruction of the modern migrant within a sophisticated, technological capitalism and a literary humanism. Arthur Kroker and David Cook in *The Postmodern Scene: Excremental Culture and Hyper-Aesthetics* refute Jean-Francois Lyotard's thesis in *The Postmodern Condition*, that we are living in the age of the death of the *grand recits*, marked by the refusal of the phallocentric and representational Enlightenment. They maintain there is a

postmodern *grand recit* being lived out, an historical era of implosion and cancellation arising out of the crisis on the ground of originary meaning and being.[35] They argue this stems from the breakdown of local cultural formations within a capitalist society where diverse cultural traditions congregate *de facto* and via media and commodity consumption on common geographical and existential ground. Each asks questions, is deconstructive, of other belief-systems, producing a society of lost coherencies.

This is the vision which Brian Friel's drama increasingly entertains. *Faith Healer* dramatises an itinerant Irish troupe wondering the shredded Celtic hinterlands of Wales who impose a critique of English capitalism and a dispossessing, decentring popular English and American culture. *Dancing at Lughnasa*, too, shows a cultural dispossession, a Celtic people whose social and metaphysical heritage has been shredded by Celtic lands turning capitalist. The technological developments of bicycle, bus and car inaugurate new social relations and altered metaphysical definitions within which the poet Heaney is located. From the car the poet's home culture becomes constructed as an *otherness* subjected to the inquisitive gaze, the *camera obscura* of a literate culture.

Heaney's poetry of car journey attaches to it the gaze and record of the camera. The film reel appears, firstly, in 'Honeymoon flight', where the road away from home for the newly-wed couple is a binding tape loosened by modern migration and mobility: 'The long grey tapes of road that bind and loose'. In the poem which records the poet's marriage, 'Wedding Day', 'the images reel over/And over', and in 'Westering' where poet and wife prepare to leave Ireland for America, 'Roads unreeled, unreeled'. The trope of the unravelling reel proffers a cinematic perception and record of journey, a form of poetry in motion. Underlying the imagery of reel and road is the self-referencing track of the poetic line which inscribes and disentangles the poet

from the claims of community, history and tradition. The deconstructive activity of *North* excoriates the unconscious of the poet and his people fulfiling the intimations of the car journeys in *Door into the Dark* which are encoded in images of mourning, death and deconstructive forms of representation: 'Islands riding themselves out into the fog' ('The Peninsula'), 'The breakers pour/ Themselves into themselves' ('Girls Bathing, Galway 1965'), 'Birth of death, exhumation for burial' ('Elegy For A Still-Born Child'), 'Choirs, dying through/ Their own live empyrean', all of which suggest the demise of an originary identity exposed to view by the detached gaze of the car and humanist forms of perception.

But although this imagery records death of the originary self, the *camera obscura* is not directed at the poet's reconstructed condition and is less conscious or declarative of the car's historically annihilative tendencies which the imagery of 'At Ardboe Point' insinuates and which again occurs in tandem with the move towards a contemporary bourgeois marriage: 'A smoke of flies/...come shattering daintily/ Against the windscreen,/ The grill and bonnet whisper/ At their million collisions'. In 'A Winter's Tale' in *Wintering Out*, the paradox of the modern and the archaic appears as a crisis-ridden relationship, as the deranged woman flees beyond the modern bounds of a deeply injurious official consciousness, signed by road and car headlights, into an unfenced country which symbolises the primitive ground of *North*: 'A pallor in the headlights/ Range wavered and disappeared./ Weeping, blood bright from her cuts/Where she'd fled the hedged and wired/ Road'.

The car, however, is a more or less transparent presence in Heaney's work, a quietism exists around the eye that might *make strange* the modern humanist culture. The kind of treatment the second-generation Irish-American, F. Scott Fitzgerald, metes out to the car as a central image of modernity in *The Great Gatsby* have intriguing correspondences with Heaney's imagery but in

Fitzgerald's work the critique is consciously rendered. Gatsby's car is presented as an alluring, fetishistic state-of-the-art commodity exuding high status, 'It was a rich cream colour, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns'.[36] The heliotropic metaphor places the car under the sign of the sky-god Hercules and his bright, shining, technological intelligence. But these images of glamour are shadowed by a coda of destruction, mourning and death which refer to the injury to the feminine and green world. After charting a whole series of minor car accidents Daisy Buchanan, returning from the metropolitan centre of New York, accidentally runs down and kills her husband's mistress in the dark night, symbolising the destructive otherness of modernity. The 'death car' leaves her 'left breast swinging loose like a flap',[37] and later the nostalgic desire for the 'fresh, green breast of the new world'[38] show the attack by a modern, masculine technology upon nature and the feminine. The Valley of the Ashes represents the modern wasteland over which brood the grotesque, faded eyes of the Doctor T.J. Eckleburg, an image of the *camera obscura* that Fitzgerald turns upon modernity.

These forms of modern reality are largely sublimated in Heaney's poetic of the exile in the sixties, seventies and early eighties. Capitalism as such in Heaney's poetry tends to be off-loaded onto the *other* of either a Planter Protestant or Imperial English culture. In *Death of a Naturalist*, festering flax-dam ('Death of a Naturalist') and 'oil-skinned river, wearing/ A transfer of gables and sky' ('An Advancement of Learning') are signs of a Protestant industrial pollution, the Protestant Docker in 'Docker' whose 'cap juts like a gantry's crossbeam,/ Cowling plated forehead and sledgehead jaw' and who is obedient to a Protestant work-ethic of salvation, 'God is a foreman.../ A factory horn will blare the resurrection', defines the Protestant industrial ethic against

which Heaney defines a rural, agrarian Irish Catholicism. 'Linen Town' honours the Protestant Republicanism of the Ulster United Irishmen but 'A New Song' desires a political and industrial greening: '...each planted bawn-/ Like bleaching-greens resumed by grass'. Nevertheless, the impetus of Heaney's desire is vested here in a discourse which has some similarity with Fitzgerald whose closure in *The Great Gatsby* also expresses a powerful wish to 'green' the land. Heaney is linked in his own discursive tradition to a residual pastoralism and native discourses of the pagan and the political which are somewhat at odds with the ethic of the car and the metropolis to which he now moves.

An Irish Narrative of Exile

The pressures and demands of the family within a modern materialist and humanist context are apparent in the reasons Heaney cites in an interview with John Haffenden for leaving Glanmore. The departure was promoted by concern about the children's schooling and the potential problems of transport for adolescent and teenage children raised by memories of 'fights about the car' in his own youth: 'I thought of the future, and in order to set the domestic machinery, quietly and efficiently to work, I thought we'd move to Dublin'.[39] Haffenden's description of the Heaney house in Dublin registers the shift from a rural to a modern suburban bourgeois style of life: 'Seamus Heaney and his family live in a handsome Edwardian semi-detached house - a convivial home - on the Strand Road leading south from Dublin'.[40] The stay at Glanmore has been a period of transition and readjustment for the exile amongst rural climes and 'September Song' marks the occasion of the Heaneys' imminent departure from Glanmore to Dublin: 'And it's nearly over/ our four years in the hedge-school'.

Under pressure from historical processes of colonisation and modernisation, the poet's feelings of exile are deflected during his stay at

Glanmore into the mythological narrative of *Sweeney Astray*. On his arrival at Glanmore Heaney immediately started work on a translation of the Middle Irish tale *Buile Suibhne* (The Madness of Sweeney), based as Heaney remarks upon J. G. O'Keefe's bilingual edition of 1913. Heaney states that:

> When I began work on this version, I had just moved to Wicklow...I was in a country of woods and hills and remembered that the green spirit of the hedges embodied in Sweeney had first been embodied for me in the persons of a family of tinkers, also called Sweeney, who used to camp along the road to the first school I attended.[41]

The second of the 'Glanmore Sonnets' articulates Heaney's efforts to get in touch through translation of the tale, within the ethos of the Glanmore hedge-school, with the plight of the pagan spirit of Sweeney: 'from the back of ditches [I] hoped to raise/ A voice caught back off slug-horn and slow chanter/ That might continue, hold, dispel, appease'. Later in 'The King of the Ditchbacks'(*SI*) Heaney refers to his artistic labour at Glanmore in more prosaic terms, presenting a picture of the artist at work in the attic-room at Glanmore imaginatively apprehending from the temporal locale of modernity, the green spirit of Celtic paganism: 'The time I'd spent obsessively in that upstairs room...as I chainsmoked and stared out the dormer into the grassy hillside I was laying myself open'. Later still in the sequence 'Glanmore Revisited' in *Seeing Things*, the poet simultaneously breaks and re-enters the attic and the words of the Gaelic text and refers back in ironic terms to the relationship between his modernity, as paternal property owner, and a founding rural parochialism, 'my own/ Masquerade as a man of property./ Even then, my first impulse was never/ To double-bar a door or lock a gate'.

The poet registers in the face of contemporary pressures of Ulster conflict and materialist change a cultural and ecological desire to evoke a green Celtic pagan past. In 'The King of the Ditchbacks'(*SI*) the poet's tracking of Sweeney begins with a rite of passage through a barred gate onto the marginal rural pagan and cultural Gaelic ground: 'a trespasser/ unbolted a forgotten gate/

and ripped the growth/ tangling its lower bars-/ just beyond the hedge/ he has opened a dark morse/ along the bank'. As a native Irish poet shaped by indigenous traditions, this physical movement serves as an image of Heaney's textual quest, his capacity to read in the signs of a rural landscape and Gaelic text a dark, othered, Celtic sensibility. The poem goes on to narrate a dream of election into the ranks of pagan poets figuring his entry into the anti-self of history and consciousness as a folk-initiation rite which resonates with the mythos and ritual of the green man whom Heaney has linked to Sweeney in his essay 'The God in the Tree': 'they dressed my head in a fishnet/ and plaited leafy twigs through meshes/ so my vision's was a bird's/ at the heart of a thicket'.

In 'Mossbawn' Heaney records a similar archetypal memory which announces the youth's fall into consciousness. The young boy 'lost in the pea-drills...a green web, a caul of veined light, a tangle of rods and pods, stalks and tendrils, full of assuaging earth and leaf smell, a sunlit lair' rouses 'as if just wakened from a winter sleep and gradually becomes aware of voices, coming closer, calling my name, and for no *reason* at all I have *begun to weep*'.[42] *This* is the moment of childhood awakening into consciousness, passing out of the pre-verbal, illiterate realm of symbiotic unity with the earth mother and the cultural and metaphysical norms she bears, into the logocentric Symbolic Order of the father, hailed into Irish being by the human voice calling him. In *Sweeney Astray* this process is reversed and couched in historical terms. The entry into Gaelic textuality and into Sweeney's consciousness, 'leaving everything he had/ for a migrant solitude', represents an adult step across a psychological and historical threshold into a pagan otherness harboured within a Gaelic lexicon: 'I learnt the Irish language, and there was a strong sense of otherness, of alternative tradition'.[43]

Heaney Astray

The nature of the migrant solitude in *Sweeney Astray* appears as twofold: as an exile the figure of Sweeney acts as an alter-ego for the uprooted Heaney; as a character abroad in the world of the *pagus* he functions as a persona exiled from history itself, by the suppression of pagan forces in the historical culture. The issue for the poet in 'Exposure', the split between the sacral world of art and the demands of the political which inaugurates Heaney's exile, get a fuller airing through the exiled Sweeney:

> ...insofar as Sweeney is a figure of the artist, displaced, guilty, assuaging himself by his utterance. It is possible to read his work as a quarrel between the free creative imagination and the constraints of religious, political and domestic obligations.[44]

Heaney is stretching analogies here to make a congruence with his own conflict in Ulster and Ireland between poetry and politics. As King of Dal-Arie, the old Celtic/Gaelic kingdom of Ireland and Scotland, Sweeney presides over a Celtic warrior society which is circumscribed by a pagan culture and a pagan geography. The report of St Ronan's transformation of the landscape in a language of territory and culture renders the process of colonisation by a Christian form of culture and by a Christian geography:

> -It is Ronan Finn, son of Bearach, they said. He is marking out a church in your territory and what you hear is the ringing bell.

Ronan's feelings of being wronged by Sweeney are couched within the language of property and territorial propriety. His accusations against Sweeney reads he 'has trespassed on me' and attempted 'eviction/ from the first place I had chosen'. It is Ronan's Christian conquest which sends the recalcitrant and pagan Sweeney into exile: 'He shall roam Ireland mad and bare'. The resistance to and banishment by the encroaching Christian colonisation of Ireland represents the political dimension of Sweeney, the dialectic between the elegiac and celebratory regard for place represents the artistic dimension. The territorial exile and migrations of Sweeney and the poetry of place that ensues make a binding congruence between the mythological Sweeney and the modern poet,

Heaney, departed from his home culture due to the intense pressure of sectarian and neo-colonial conflict.

Heaney profiles the geographical parallels between Sweeney's migrations and Heaney's modern movements from mid-Ulster to Wicklow:

> My fundamental relation with Sweeney, however, is topographical. His kingdom lay in what is now south County Antrim and north County Down, and for thirty years I lived on the verges of that territory, in sight of some of Sweeney's places and in earshot of others - Slemish, Rasharkin, Benevenagh, Dunservick, the Bann, the Roe, the Mournes...I moved to Wicklow not all that far from Sweeeny's final resting ground at St Mullins.[45]

Sean O'Tuama sees *Buile Suibhne* as a 'notable example of *dinnseanchas*-type literature'[46] and Heaney in his essay 'The God in the Tree: Early Irish Nature Poetry' writes of the medieval Irish text that 'the love of place and lamentation against exile from a cherished territory is another typical strain in the Celtic sensibility'.[47] Sweeney/Heaney lament the loss of the comforting intimacies of the topography of the home ground, 'long exiled from those rushy hillsides,/ far from my home among the reeds'. Sweeney elegises upon his own uprootedness:

> Sweeney from Rasharkin,
> Look at me now
>
> always shifting
> making fresh pads,
> and always at night. (17)

Sweeney speaks here of feelings of deracination and the stripping away of identity which the culture and geography of his customary habitat have provided. He does so through a language characteristic of Heaney's own seasonal mythic patterns of Ireland's geography. Sweeney's cold, disconsolate feelings of isolation from home are given within an imagery of winter: 'Frost casts me like an effigy/ unless I shift and break free/ when gales from the plain of Leinster/ fan me alive, a bleak ember/ dreaming when summer dies/ round Hallowe'en and All-Hallow,/ another move to my old ground'. The 'bleak ember' which emblemises Sweeney's discomfort is akin to the emotional deprivation and isolation Heaney experiences in 'Tinder' ('cold cinder') and

'Stump' ('black stump of home') in *Wintering Out* and the 'meagre heat' of 'Exposure' at the close of *North*.

Against the imagistic backdrop of winter and exile, Glen Bolcain carries the symbolic weight of pastoral comfort, a paradisiacal spring sanctuary which is Sweeney's 'ark and Eden, where he would go to ground', equivalent in its textures of feeling to the Glanmore retreat Heaney portrays in *Field Work*. While Sweeney celebrates his home ground of Rasharkin above all other geographical regions of Ireland: 'I have seen all of them,/ north, south, east and west/ but never saw the equal/ of this ground in Antrim', Glen Bolcain rendered through *dinnseanchas* becomes a compensatory nurturing place of beauty, peace and meditation for the outcast:

> Glen Bolcain is like this...
> its fast streams, all hush and jabber,
> its islands on forking rivers,
> its hazel trees and holly bowers,
> its acorns and leaves and briars,
> its nuts, its sharp-tasting sloes,
> its sweet, cool-fleshed berries:
>
> and under trees, its hounds coursing,
> its loud stag bellowing,
> its waters' clear endless fall-

In the solitude and beauty of nature, Sweeney finds consolation and solace, rather like Heaney at Glanmore. Communality and autonomy are at constant odds in the poem, a symptom of the schizoid condition of the Sweeney/Heaney mentality, for there are times when Sweeney categorically enunciates his preference for being out of the society of men and women: 'I prefer the elusive/ rhapsody of blackbirds/ to the garrulous blather/ of men and women'. Sweeney as bird-man emblemises the poet in flight from the North and Heaney's own role as hermit-poet in the South.

Heaney's impulse to immerse himself in a pagan exile and override the modern is answered in contemporary writing by Paul Muldoon. Just as Heaney plays off against the homophonic Sweeney - 'whose name and parts of whose

experience rhyme with the writer's'[48] - so Muldoon plays off against the homonym Mael Duin, using the mythical Irish figure as a parodic alter ego for his own journey around postmodernist, cosmopolitan American landscapes. Muldoon's poems 'Immrama' and 'Immram' in *Why Brownlee Left*, take their cue from *The Immrama* or 'Voyages' which 'form a group of Old Irish mythological voyage tales, amongst which is numbered *Immram Mael Duin*'.[49] In 'Immrama' the poet trails his father's spirit from 'the mud-walled cabin behind the mountain/ Where he was born and bred'[50] to building sites in Wigan and Crewe in England and then to South America where Nazi war criminals reside. Then in 'Immram' he cuts a Chandleresque figure in his search for his father amongst the late urban and industrial confusions of an American landscape, a postmodern irony which rebukes the gravitas and nativism of the Sweeney/Heaney alter-ego in *Sweeney Astray*.

In 'The More A Man Has The More A Man Wants' in *Quoof*, Muldoon presents a postmodern narrative of the outcast and the exile which ironically profiles the traditionalism of the *dinnseanchas* Heaney reworks in *Sweeney Astray*. The poem directly parodies Sweeney's narrative. The fugitive Gallogly wears a modern 'thorn-proof tweed jacket' to protect himself against the thorns which pierce and persecute the outcast Sweeney and satirises Sweeney's paean to the trees of Ireland. Gallogly is 'drawn out of the woods/ by an apple pie/ left to cool on a window sill'. The anti-pastoral humour of Muldoon's narrative reaches its climax in his parody of Sweeney's celebration of Glen Bolcain:

> He will answer the hedge-sparrow's
> *Littlebitofbreadandnocheese*
> with a whole bunch
> of freshly picked watercress,
> a bulb of garlic,
> sorrel,
> with many-faceted blackberries.
> Gallogly is out to lunch.[51]

Muldoon strips Gallogly, and by deputation, Sweeney, of the romantic seriousness which traditional Irish pastoral attributed its heroes.

Pursued throughout by state security forces, Gallogly, a mixture of Gael and Sioux, roams colonised and capitalised rural and urban Ulster and American landscapes. It is in a post-colonial and late capitalist American landscape that Gallogly dies. A 'picture by Edward Hopper/ of a gas station/ in the mid-West' is imprinted with the figure of 'a gallowglass/ hot-foot from a woodcut/ by derrick'. On this ambiguous, confusing and imperialist cultural site, Gallogly meets death by explosive. And rather like a latter-day Moling, the petrol-pump attendant 'who dragged the head and torso/ clear/...mouthed an Act of Contrition/ in the frazzled ear.'[52] Like Sweeney, Gallogly is an outsider constantly on the move, but his encounters are more directly with powerful post-colonial forces of modernity, a condition which Heaney's later volumes encounter more directly.

1. William Shakespeare, *Henry VI Part I*, Act I, Sc.i, ll.2-5.

2. Robert Hogan, ed., *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins*, p.125.

3. Terry Eagelton, '*Wuthering Heights* and the Great Hunger' (Warwick, 1993), n.p..

4. See T.S. Eliot, 'The Fire Sermon' in *The Wasteland.*

5. See 'The Fire i' the Flint', in *Preoccupations*, pp.79-97.

6. Blake Morrison, *Seamus Heaney*, p.76.

7. June Beisch, 'An Interview with Seamus Heaney', *Literary Review*, 29 (1986), 161-9 (p.168).

8. Thomas C.Foster, *Seamus Heaney*, p.84.

9. June Beisch, 'An Interview with Seamus Heaney', *Literary Review*, 29 (1986), 161-9 (p.168).

10. Elmer Andrews, *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: All The Realms of Whisper*, p.123.

11. Elmer Andrews, p.127.

12. See James Randall, 'Interview', *Ploughshares*, 5 (1979), 7-22.

13. Seamus Heaney, 'Yeats as an Example?', in *Preoccupations*, pp.98-114 (p.100).

14. Seamus Heaney, 'The Makings of a Music', in *Preoccupations*, pp.61-78 (p.65).

15. John Haffenden, 'Meeting Seamus Heaney', in *Viewpoints: Poets in Conversation* (London, 1981), pp.57-75 (p.62).

16. Jacques Derrida, 'The White Mythology', *New Literary History*, VI (1974-5), 7-74. (p.51).

17. Jacques Derrida, p.56.

18. Melvyn Bragg,'Interview', *The South Bank Show*, BBC1, 31 October 1991.

19. Melvyn Bragg, 'Interview'.

20. Melvyn Bragg, 'Interview'.

21. Elmer Andrews, p.116.

22. Frank Kinahan, 'An Interview with Seamus Heaney', in *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1982), 405-14 (p.411).

23. Seamus Deane, 'Seamus Heaney: The Timorous and the Bold', in *Celtic Revivals*, pp.174-86 (p.184).

24. Thomas C.Foster, p.94.

25. Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1955), 10-26 (p.14).

26. Claire Willis, 'Upsetting the Public: Carnival, Hysteria and Women's Texts', in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, edited by Ken Hirschkopf and David Shepherd (Manchester, 1989), pp.130-52 (p.141).

27. Medh McGuckian, *Venus in the Rain*, p.32.

28. Blake Morrison, p.73.

29. Edward Said, 'Narrative, Geography and Interpretation, *New Left Review*, 180 (1990), 81-97 (p.82).

30. Desmond Fennell, *Whatever You Say Say Nothing: Why Seamus Heaney in No.1*, p.21.

31. Peter Jones and Michael Schmidt, eds. Introduction to *British Poetry Since 1970: A Critical Survey*, xxii.

32. Jones and Schmidt, xxiii.

33. Desmond Fennell, pp.25-26.

34. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, Penguin (1982), p.95.

35. Arthur Kroker and David Cook, *The Postmodern Scene: Excremental Culture and Hyper-Aesthetics*, p.84.

36. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin (1984), p.70.

37. F. Scott Fitzgerald, p.144.

38. F. Scott Fitzgerald, p.187.

39. John Haffenden, p.62.

40. John Haffenden, p.57.

41. Seamus Heaney, 'Introduction', in *Sweeney Astray*.

42. Seamus Heaney, 'Mossbawn', in *Preoccupations*, pp.17-27 (p.17).

43. June Beisch, p.163.

44. 'Introduction', *Sweeney Astray*.

45. 'Introduction', *Sweeney Astray*.

46. Sean O'Tuama, 'Stability and Ambivalence: Aspects of the Sense of Place and Religion in Irish Literature', in *Ireland: Towards a Sense of Place*, pp.21-33 (p.24).

47. Seamus Heaney, 'The God in the Tree', in *Preoccupations*, pp.181-89 (p.(184).

48. Seamus Heaney, 'Pilgrim's Journey', in *Poetry Book Society*, 123 (Winter 1984).

49. John Ayto, *Macmillan Dictionary of Irish Literature*, p.31.

50. Paul Muldoon, *Selected Poems*, p.52.

51. Paul Muldoon, p.93.

52. Paul Muldoon, p.109.

CHAPTER 8: A PLACELESS HEAVEN

The invocation of a mythic paradigm for the condition of the poet-in-exile through the translation of the archaic Celtic tale, *Sweeney Astray*, is extended in Heaney's later volumes by a creative reworking of the autobiographical life. The mythic journey through the perilous wilderness of the medieval Celtic romance tales or the 'dark wood' initially encountered on Dante's journey in *The Divine Comedy* is represented in 'The Plantation' at the close of *Door into the Dark*, where Heaney is witnessed entering the dark forest of Irish history and the mysterious self which he is to explore and excavate in *Wintering Out* and *North*. The rite is rendered in terms of the Hansel and Gretel legend: 'You had to come back/ To learn how to lose yourself,/ To be pilot and stray-witch,/ Hansel and Gretel in one'. As Joseph Campbell maps the monomyth of adventure in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, the hero, having survived a succession of trials, must cross the supremely difficult threshold of adventure back into the land of common day; at the same time he must pass from the sphere of earthly adventure to a transcendental yonder shore, the journey of the soul. In the later volumes, the mythic patterns of the Sweeney rites, the Dantesque passage through *inferno, purgatorio and paradiso*, the Anglo-Saxon rite of passage in 'A Ship of Death' in *The Haw Lantern*, the classical and fairy tale rites implicated in 'Underground' at the opening of *Station Island* to the poems of Classical passage in 'The Golden Bough' (*Aeneid*, Book vi, lines 98-148) and 'The Crossing' (*Inferno*, Canto III, lines 82-129), which respectively open and close *Seeing Things*, represent Heaney's continuing efforts to transcend the dark personal and public history through which he has lived.

A key paradigm for the trials of Ulster history and the poet's exile from that homeland is the Dantesque movement through the Catholic metaphysical landscapes countenanced in *The Divine Comedy*. A number of poems in *Field Work* rework Dante's journey through the *Inferno* as a means of countenancing Heaney's Irish fate. 'Sybil' speaks of the political and cultural terrain of Ireland within metaphors of territorial violation and dismemberment. The 'ground' itself is 'flayed and calloused', its 'entrails' showing. Against this violence and an image of a people turned atavistic ('Dogs in a siege. Saurian lapses. Pismires') the prophetic voice of the Sybil appeals for the healing salve of forgiveness amongst the self-destructive landscapes of Ulster which draws upon the imagery of Dante's wood of suicides in *Inferno*: 'Unless forgiveness finds its nerve and voice,/ Unless the helmeted and bleeding tree/ Can green and open buds like infant's fists'. It is an imagery which also recalls the green, helmeted water-pump and *omphalos* of Mossbawn described in the 'Mossbawn' essay.

'Ugolino' which closes the volume utilises the *Inferno* to present the stygian emotions of hatred, violence and death in the nightmare of Ulster history, for as Heaney notes:

> I sensed there was something intimate, almost carnal, about those feuds and sorrows of medieval Pisa, something that could perhaps mesh with and house the equivalent and destructive energies of Belfast.[1]

In the inverse underworld of Dante's *Inferno* where the sinner is victimised by his own form of earthly sinfulness Count Ugolino 'takes ferocious and savage revenge against Archbishop Roger for the latter's cruelty against Ugolino and his four sons':[2]

> Gnawing at him where the neck and the head
> Are grafted to the sweet fruit of the brain
> Like a famine victim at a loaf of bread.

Curtis' allegorical reading of the poem sees the 'neck and head' of Archbishop Roger as representing the 'six counties of Ulster perched on the map on the shoulders of Eire'.[3] In this reading, the four sons of Ugolino may equate to the

four provinces of Ireland: their death, the death of Ireland as a united entity, the carnal appetite, the desire to reunify the island. The imagery of a great hunger inevitably calls to mind, too, the Irish famine, the devouring hatred, a revenge by Ireland upon colonial England for its neglect and responsibility for the famine in the nineteenth century. In 'Leavings', too, the poet turns the tables on an historical English Protestant enmity which is practiced against a feminine Irish Catholicism by consigning the offending Thomas Cromwell to the *Inferno* where he treads the burning sands of the seventh circle, a fitting punishment for the sinner's earthly iconoclastic ire.

Although *Field Work* sought a door out of the dark of Irish history, the return across the threshold of adventure takes fuller shape in *Station Island*. Recuperating the threshold imagery of 'The Plantation' where Heaney becomes a lost Hansel in an Irish forest, the opening poem, 'Underground', invokes Hansel's return home from the wood in which he has been abandoned by following under the moonlight the trail of white pebbles he has laid: 'I came as Hansel came on the moonlit stones/ Retracing the path, lifting the buttons'. For Heaney, the track out of the wood is charted by his poetry, a condition reinforced by the mythic return of the lyric Orpheus from the Underworld which represents the subterranean passage for Heaney through an imperialist history for which the London Underground is chief sign. But Heaney is not completely out of the wood yet. Heaney's perturbed thought in 'Away From It All': 'And I still cannot clear my head/ of lives in their element...the hampered one out of water', enunciates the poet's continuing preoccupation with an historical form of exile. The lobster, which is being prepared for the delectation of the dinner-party, is imagined as 'a rainy stone/ the colour of sunk munitions' which raises to the poet's mind sublimated memories of his original and violent cultural milieu. The culinary change in the lobster, 'we plunged and reddened it', emblematises in an infernal imagery his own subterranean

plunge and searing transformation during his migratory passage through an era of political violence and personal exile.

A similarly coloured russet stone thrown up on the shingle beach by the sea in 'Sandstone Keepsake' also symbolises a history of violence. The stone is mythically encoded as one taken from the Phlegethon, the boiling river of blood which flows through Dante's *Inferno* and corresponds in the poem to the river which flows out of Ulster by way of Magilligan internment camp on Lough Foyle.[4] In the poet's mind, the stone metamorphoses into the heart of Henry III's nephew assassinated by Guy de Montfort, 'as if I'd plucked the heart/ that damned Guy de Montfort...his victim's heart in its casket'.

The heart emblematically represents the incinerating sectarian violence and reprisal murder within Ulster culture underwritten by the guilt of his own departure to the political domain of the Republic and into the existential domain of the self: 'staring across at the watch-towers/ from my free state of image and allusion'. The reference is paradoxical, the poet referring troublingly to his internal exile in the Irish Free State in which he now resides but also aware of the 'free state' of the imagination released from the constraints of Ulster tribal loyalty and allegiance. Inverting the hubris of the Hamlet character in *North*, Heaney deflates his historical role: 'not about to set the times right or wrong'. Heaney's anti-heroic rhetoric is embodied in his minuscule and ghostly presence to the gaze of the watch-tower: 'a silhouette and not worth bothering about.../ stooping along, one of the venerators' - a far remove from the terrorising gaze of the ministry of fear recorded in his earlier poetry. The poem represents a rite of appeasement, making a peace with his conscience and his people in Ulster, though still echoing the troubling sentiments of 'Exposure' where the poet agonises over a step taken out of history.

Station Island: A Pilgrim's Journey

In moving the metaphysical space from *inferno* to *purgatorio*, the central section 'Station Island' in *Station Island* represents a sphere in which the poet can redeem his guilt-ridden relation to his original Mossbawn and Ulster community. The sequence charts a personal myth of transcendence through a humanist-literary version of the travails of Purgatory, a tradition asserted by Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the metaphysics of the *Purgatorio* but also reminiscent of Bloom's fantasy trial in the Circa episode in *Ulysses* where the protagonist appears in the underworld of his own psychic repression. Heaney's imagination expedites a series of images of official and transgressive selves which plot the conflicts in his private and public life: the women of the community, priest and parents who are upholders and promoters of Catholic law, pagan and artistic rebels, dissenters and blasphemers who oppose Catholic law. The figures encountered on the journey around Station Island dramatise the dialectic between home and exile, between the rural, religious and political values of a parochial Ulster Catholic life and a pagan-humanist ethic which informs the poet's exiled consciousness.

The options available to Heaney on his personal journey through life are symbolically located in the choice of pathways attaching to a narcotic pastoral Catholicism and an intuitive rival humanism and paganism laid down in the purgatorial landscapes of Station Island. The first station places the intuitively 'sensed...trail' of the tinker and pagan, Simon Sweeney - kin in spirit to Mad Sweeney written up in *Sweeney Astray* - alongside the spiritually-narcotic 'drugged path' of a parochial ritualised Mossbawn Catholicism which is the track Heaney takes out of station one. The subsequent imagery of the circle in the station sequence represents parochial ties to the communal social circle and the well-trodden, ritual pathways of that community. While the circuit of Station Island is the most compelling Catholic circle, in station three the poet thinks of 'walking round/ and round a space utterly empty' which is the ring of repression constructed

by maternal and domestic administration of Catholic hegemony and in station four the poet remembers following the apprentice Catholic cleric on his ritual circling of the mid-Ulster parish: 'I waded silently/ behind him, on his circuits, visiting'.

At the same time an imagery of a transgressive individualistic and linear artistic route emerges. In a relationship reminiscent of that between Dante and his literary guide, Virgil, the poet in station five 'falls in behind' a former Latin master who promoted a humanist form of learning, before the adult poet Oedipally outstrips his instructor's cultural authority: 'I moved ahead and faced him, shook his hand'. Heaney follows, too, in the footsteps of literary predecessors, William Carleton and Patrick Kavanagh, who have written of Station Island in *The Lough Derg Pilgrim* (1828) and 'Lough Derg: A Poem' (1942). Kavanagh represents a parochial literary form of irreverence for Catholic values reminding Heaney who 'has made the pad' after his predecessor that the odd one came to Station Island 'on the hunt for women'. The poet is also witnessed peeling off from the procession of women to encounter a greater transgressor, William Carleton, who bears testament to the kind of betrayals of community that art has generated in Heaney's own life: 'I made the traitor in me sink the knife./ And maybe there's a lesson there for you'. He reminds Heaney that the modern poetic journey is 'a road you travel alone', a condition encouraged by an educational-literary humanist ideology which is ranged in Heaney's young life against the unquestioning obeisance to a Catholic hegemony.

Encounters with the demoralised cleric, former schoolmasters, literary predecessors and the sanctuary of pagan spaces creates a break with the poet's fellow Irish Catholic travellers. On the fifth of the stations the poet recounts that 'I was faced wrong way/ into more pilgrims absorbed in this exercise'. On the following station, the poet, filled with thoughts of sexual encounter and pagan repose, arrives at the moment of Sweeney closing his ears to the commands of the Church ('I shut my ears to the bell'), thus placing himself in an oppositional relationship to his fellow wayfarers: 'A stream of pilgrims answering the bell/

Trailed up the steps as I went down them'. But Catholicism in the series is not only a religious formation, a belief system, but a marker of indigenous forms of identity which characterise sensibility, sexuality and defines the political realm. The confrontation of Catholicism in the first series of stations allows Heaney to go on an *excursus* into the most troublesome aspect of his life as an Irish writer, the relationship between the political and the poetic.

On stations seven to nine where he confronts the political aspect of Irish selfhood, the stones are hardest, the night darkest, self-scrutiny the most painful and punitive. As a dissenter from the political forms of community transgression, he is forced to admonish rather than assert his art. The sectarian victim, William Streatham, Heaney's dying friend, archaeologist Tom Delaney, cousin and sectarian victim, Colum McCartney and, finally, Francis Hughes, IRA hunger-striker from Heaney's locale, are all shades who return to admonish and rebuke Heaney for his personal and artistic evasions of disease and violent death. It is a form of cowardice which spills out into all aspects of Heaney's artistic life, noted in the way his origins engendered a subtle manoeuvrability with which he connived: 'I hate how quick I was to know my place./ I hate where I was born, hate everything/ That made me biddable and unforthcoming'.

After the dark night of the soul in the stations of political accusation, the poet appears within an iconography of purification, resurrection and reconciliation mediated through his art. Out of the nightmare of disease, maternal dependence, mastectomy and the debauched and deracinated self portrayed in station nine arises an image of artistic regeneration: 'A lighted candle rose up/ Until the whole bright-masted thing retrieved/ A course'. The illicit sea-shell trinket in sonnet three, emblem of maternal, Catholic repression, which is floated in the imagination of the poet as 'a shimmering ark' is resurrected in this pivotal station of redemption and reappears again in station eleven in the 'marvellous lightship' which surfaces as an emblem of Heaney's art out of the corrupted, muddied waters of the Mossbawn

past. In a baptism of his own, Heaney exonerates himself of Catholic guilt as he is reminded of the monk who instead of persecuting him for his transgressive sensuous thoughts 'made me feel there was nothing to confess'.

Heaney is not rejecting but undergoing a rites of passage which charts a form of reconciliation with home. In the stir of the morning hostel, lit by sunlight, the poet culls from his memories of the Mossbawn farmhouse an earthenware mug whose decor of 'cornflowers, blue sprig after sprig' evokes the warm, simplistic, pastoral relationship to the home ground presented in the 'Mossbawn' poems which preface *North*. As Cairns and Richards note, the mug becomes the very emblem of Heaney's artistic process of defamiliarisation, an example of *ostranenie* as the mug is seen in the unfamiliar surroundings of a local drama:[5]

> There was one night
> When the fit-up actors used it for a prop
> and I sat in a dark hall estranged from it
> as a couple vowed and called it their loving cup

Seen in this unfamiliar light, the mug becomes a symbol of the mutual affection between artist and the rural home. 'Dipped and glamoured from this translation/ it was returned with all its cornflower haze/ still dozing'. The somnambulism of Catholic rural life is signalled by the mug but it is also a modest item of affection and simplicity which persists in the quiet, private, parochial life beyond the intensities of the political and the glamorous public display of art. Heaney enlarges the pattern of loss and recovery of the pastoral, homely vision of the mug by displacing the narrative of the recovery of Ronan's psalter, 'as the otter surfaced with Ronan's psalter/ miraculously unharmed, that had been lost/ a day and a night under lough water'. Miraculously, as Foster puts it, the fragile, pastoral mug and poet survive 'against all likelihood'.[6] Heaney discovers here a door back into an Irish light, 'The dazzle of the impossible suddenly/ blazed across a threshold, a sun-glare/ to put out the small hearths of constancy'.

The final station features the poet as 'convalescent', recovering his health and vigour after his sapping purgatorial journey. Back on the mainland the *deraciné* senses 'again/ an alien comfort as I stepped on ground/ to find the helping hand still gripping mine/ fish-cold and bony, but whether to guide/ or to be guided I could not be certain'. Grappling with the claims of country, religion and language, these issues are now spoken of as a young man's project, exemplified in the transgressive narrative of Stephen Dedalus in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* which Heaney has revered as a model for his own artistic life. Acting as a literary conscience, Joyce admonishes the poet's obsession with tribal grievance and personal grief in an imagery which recalls 'Exposure' where the disillusioned artist pokes at the embers of a fire to stoke up some heat: 'You are raking at dead fires/ a waste of time for somebody your age./ That subject people stuff is a cod's game,/ infantile, like your peasant pilgrimage'. The Joycean voice insists upon exile and estrangement from the claims of the collective, an assertion countenanced again in the symbolism of the community circle and the autonomous artistic line: 'Keep at a tangent/ When they make the circle wide, it's time to swim/ out on your own and fill the element/ with signatures on your own frequency'.

Like the solitary fish, Louis O'Neill in 'Casualty'(*FW*), 'Swimming toward the lure/ Of warm lit-up places', Heaney has none of the 'shoaling habits of the community'[7] that would enable him to conform. The circle of community represents conformity, art is generated on the road that runs at a tangent to community represented in Joyce's own 'straight walk' into the downpour at the close of the pilgrimage. 'Station Island' becomes a form of palinode, while one of the principle themes is the exiled poet's confrontation with his own guilt at his desertion from his originating Ulster Catholic place and culture, there is a strong reversal in feeling and attitude towards his Mossbawn homelands as it becomes a revealed site of repression and denial.

Making Mossbawn Strange

Although using *the myths and rituals of Romance and Christian tradition*, Heaney's poetry continues to exhibit and refer to the forces of modernity which historically and literally *drive* the poet on his journey. The 'Station Island' narrative is bracketed by Heaney's modernity: driving his car across the mountain to do his stations he meets the shade of the nineteenth-century writer, William Carleton, whom he first observes in the driving mirror of his late twentieth-century car; on the final station the shade of James Joyce is last seen in a shower of rain walking 'on the tarmac among the cars'. 'Westering' at the close of *Wintering Out* places a world constructed by the metaphysics of the car against that of an indigenous Irish Catholicism. The 'bare altar' of a Good Friday Mass represents a Lenten image of a religion whose fascination for the humanist and car-orientated poet has been dispelled. A late twentieth-century Stephen Dedalus, he records his feelings of liberation from that acquiescence, wondering 'What nails dropped out that hour?'. In a radio interview with Melvyn Bragg, Heaney speaks of the metaphysical view of the world in Ireland which exists alongside an 'opportunist, economic view of the world':

> In Ireland we have a religious unconscious and a certain amount of religious power in the country still, but there's also a modernised, successfully deconstructed religious absence and a sense of Europe not as where the saints and scholars go but where the young graduates now go to Brussels.[8]

The volumes of *Station Island* and beyond exhibit an expanding consciousness of the dialectic between the modern and the archaic and the implications for a late twentieth-century Ireland. 'In the Beech' in the 'Sweeney Redivivus' section of the volume, Heaney alludes to the splits in modern Irish consciousness: 'the reek of churned-up mud' on the farm conditions a rural consciousness which has been infiltrated by the industrial and the modern, 'I watched the red-brick chimney rear/ its stamen course by course'. In *The Haw Lantern*, 'Terminus', the Roman god of boundaries, watches over the Irish landscape where the sight of acorn and rusted

bolt, dormant mountain and factory chimney, trotting horse and shunting engine chart the dialectic of archaism and modernity.

The sequence of poems which make up 'Sandpit' at the close of Part One of *Station Island* detail the changes in the rural landscape of Northern Ireland wrought by modernity within the epoch of the poet's own life. The poem sequence remembers the building of a post-war housing estate (where the poet's grandparents lived) from the first excavation of a local sandpit to the final construction of the estate. The semantics of the raw materials is dynamic, a geological sedimentary rock, building stone, a commodity as sand, brick, house and housing-estate, then home. The building converts older forms of life and consciousness into newer forms, the past 'with one chop of the trowel' is sent 'into the brick forever'. In the postmodernist manner exemplified by Edward Soja's work, space transforms the historical consciousness. The thriving local industry, the money to be made out of quarrying sand and gravel in the making of bricks for housing - 'A fortune in sand then', 'this sand,/ this lustre in their heavy land/ is greedy coppers hammered/ in the wishing tree of their talk,/the damp ore of money', represents an imagery of the elemental, the earthy, the traditional being mined and reproduced as commodity within a system of modernity.

Heaney's poems of Part One present a series of return-of-the-native narratives in memory, metaphor and fact to home ground in order to acknowledge and accede to the changes that have taken place within the Mossbawn locale during the era of his lifetime. An elegy for an old Irish countryman, 'Last Look' represents the exile's relationship to a declining indigenous rural tradition eroded by a transformative modernity. The aging rural man is immersed in meditation and in terms of consciousness, in the countryside, 'stilled/ and oblivious,/ gazing into a field/ of blossoming potatoes'. He is oblivious to the visitors who observe him from the detachment and distance of the car to which the fecund sovereign countryside is hostile: 'Crowned blunt-headed weeds/ that flourished in the verge/

flailed against our car'. The old man taking his 'last look' is recollecting his youth in Donegal, an intimate, unhurried rural way of life also at odds with an emerging modernity pictured in the drama of the horse and cart meeting a Model Ford on the country lane.

These same typologies are developed in 'Making Strange' which is a dramatised mediation between polarised aspects of the rural, unlettered self and the artistic self, the 'unshorn and bewildered' countryman supported by rural simplicities and the travelled stranger who is driven in Heaney's car around the local landscape: 'I found myself driving the stranger/through my own country'. Parochial countryman, Antaeus, the world of custom, work and place, have been consistently set against educated sophisticate, Hercules, the world of the car, education, ideas and uprootedness. Heaney's poetic voice intervenes in a very self-consciously dramatised form as a third party to mediate and synthesize the polarised identities:

> Then a cunning middle voice
> came out of the field across the road
> saying, "Be adept and be dialect..."

Two voices speaking in one field, the poem is about the roots of Heaney's imagination, and the subsequent relationship between the parochial and the metropolitan.

The process of *ostranenie* maps the movement of the sophisticated lettered man away from the non-literate life of home. 'Changes' acknowledges the excoriation of the unlettered life and its value in the poet's life. Heaney offers the memory of the passing rural life of Mossbawn as palliative to the alienation precipitated by modernity and the cosmopolitan life of the city: 'Remember this.../ when you have gone away and stand at last/ at the very centre of the empty city'. This is reminiscent of Kavanagh's sardonic musings about 'the City of Kings/ Where art music, letters are the real thing'.

In 'The Birthplace' Heaney openly adverts to the motif of the native's return, producing through the visit to Hardy's rural birthplace and thoughts about his novel *The Return of the Native* a vicarious narrative of return to primary sources of identity and, as Corcoran puts it, provides 'an education in displacement',[9] though education is also a causal factor in that displacement. The 'reliable/ ghost life he carried, with no need to invent' constructs the condition of a past living on only in memory rather than actuality. What remains for the rural artist is a language of rural feeling which can remember in discourse the dismembered past:

> birthplace, roofbeam, whitewash,
> flagstone, hearth,
> like unstacked iron weights
>
> afloat among galaxies.

What is available is a semiotics of the rural life which can simulate and stimulate in a textual discourse the signifiers of a rural actuality which has departed.

The journey away from home in Part One is embedded in a vocabulary of the modern and the technological, epitomised in 'A Bat on the Road' flying along 'the Midland and Scottish Railway' and ahead of the poet on the road. 'The Railway Children' replicates the imagery of the railway line alongside which runs a telegraph line receding into the distance: 'Like lovely freehand they curved for miles'. Coded as a calligraphy, rain droplets represent the words that travel along the wires, 'We thought words travelled the wires/ In the shiny pouches of raindrops', the seeds of poems that will take the modern poet away from home. It is the system of the all-conquering Hercules, each raindrop word 'seeded full with the light/ Of the sky'.

'The Loaning' also evokes the noisy fanfare of the machine age of the sky-born Hercules, overhead cables and nearby highway, drown out the sound of the indigenous earth and culture: 'High-tension cables/ singing above cattle, tractors, barking dogs,/ juggernauts changing gear a mile away./ And always the surface noise of the earth/ you didn't know you'd heard till a twig snapped'. Language is

no longer local and oral but part of a modern communications system which will lift the poet out of locale and into a system of letters and its associated institutional and money structures.

The Unravelling Twine

'Sweeney Redivivus' deals more historically with the reconstruction of self and culture in language, discourse and textuality while illustrating the capacity of text to distance the poet from community and place. 'The Scribes' enunciates the manner in which a Pagan nature is reproduced and brought under the dominion of language by Catholic colonisation. Like Friel's reference to the new textuality of Christianity registered in *The Enemy Within*, Heaney emphasises the new materials of the newly institutionalised writer at work in the scriptorium: 'quills', 'ink', 'vellum', 'chalk', 'print', 'text', 'lettering', 'page'. The Catholic scribes 'set about taming and stylising nature in their penwork'[10] exchanging an oral, spoken tradition for a learned, writerly one. The natural world is transposed into a linguistic world, nature is transformed into the materiality of culture ('the holly tree/ they rendered down for ink') and pagan quiddity is transformed into civilised repression ('Under the rumps of lettering/ they herded myopic angers').

The sequence of poems plots the movement into a displaced order of pagan history, language and sensibility which the text of *Sweeney Astray* represents. The written language of the scribes' texts is the means of migration for Heaney to a poetry of the *pagus*, opening up to Heaney's imaginative view the relationship between Catholic, pagan and poetic text which the sequence as a whole explores. As 'The Cleric' announces, the scribe's documentation of the pagan life 'opened my path to a kingdom/ of such scope and neuter allegiance/ my emptiness reigns at its whim'. The poem reproduces a mythos of the Fall in which the writerly itself marks the moment of eviction from a pure relationship between self, speech and nature. Like Friel, Heaney here also enters into a Rousseauist assumption of a

pure 'metaphysics of language'[11] in oral, pre-scripted pagan culture. But this ignores the presence of Ogham, already a form of script present to the pre-Christian and pre-Greek alphabetic world,[12] and also overlooks contemporary theories of language such as Derrida's argument made in *Writing and Difference* that the oral word as a medium of culture is as freighted and tracked by history and ideology as a scripted language.

'The First Gloss' which begins the sequence articulates the guilt-freeing move to the cultural margins of the Gaelic text and the *pagus*:

> Take hold of the shaft of the pen.
> Subscribe to the first step taken
> from a justified line
> into the margin.

As a theological term 'justified' signifies a sin-free state, an appropriate strand of meaning for a man who has undergone a purgatorial pilgrimage but ironic in the sense that it is not a Catholic state of purity he has achieved but a liberation from the Catholic ethic of guilt. The 'justified line' signs the Christian line of grace beyond which is sited an outlaw field of history and discourse, the othered domain of Sweeney into which Heaney poetically steps. Heaney is also implicating the print aspect of the term 'justified' which involves aggregating the space between words, perhaps spreading language to construct a domain of textuality which justifies his Ulster-Irish identity. In using the verb 'subscribe' to articulate his migration, Heaney registers his rites of writerly passage and his own signatory registration in the textual matrix of *Sweeney Astray*. This marks Heaney's locus within a realm of textuality rather than a man refracting a present or orally-memorised world.

'Sweeney Redivivus' symbolically encodes the poetic mind as a fecund site of linguistic and historical remembrance: 'my head like a ball of twine/ dense with soakage, but beginning/ to unwind'. 'Unwinding' advances the image of the mind unravelling the linguistic line of Heaney's inheritance. The 'twine unravels to the

very end' to a point 'existing beyond and beneath the level of civilised expectation and decorum'[13] of a modern rural Catholic Ireland: 'sex-pruned and unfurtherable/ moss-talk, incubated under lamplight,/ which will have to be unlearned.../ so the twine unwinds and loosely widens/ backward through areas that forwarded/ understandings of all I would undertake'.

In 'Holly' Heaney is saturated by the winter rain, collecting holly for Christmas, representing a renewed contact with the elemental and the pagan. In his return to the Gaelic text of Sweeney, the print appears as a winterbush, 'I reach for a book like a doubter/ and want it to flare around my head, a black-letter bush', wanting it to evoke the textures of a pagan winter, 'cutting as holly and ice.' Heaney is taking issue with conventional Catholic and English colonial discourse, reinvesting the 'backward' with impressive forms of meaning. In the words of 'The God in the Tree' this is Heaney's own 'poetic imagination linked to the barbaric life of the wood'.[14] Images of the barbarian self appear in 'The Artist', 'a dog barking/ at the image of himself barking', and 'Sweeney Redivivus', 'my wild reflection in the mirror'.

'Alerted', too, dramatises Heaney's 'quibbling reason'[15] being overwhelmed by the uncompromising, untamed call of the wild, hearing the 'bark of the vixen on heat'. She inhabits a domain beyond 'obedience' and 'demure', an anti-enlightenment, anti-rationalist realm which historically precedes the scientific revolution commensurate with the epoch of English/British colonialism. Heaney in a post-colonial epoch, like Friel, has imaginatively unwound back and dispensed with the clock, returning to a pre-Newtonian and pre-Copernican world-view: 'alerted, disappointed/ under my old clandestine/ pre-Copernican night'.

Sermon in Stones

'On the Road' metaphorically replays the drive of the poet on a modern journey away from home and within a system of textuality though with a new

pejorative edge. Reeling in the line of his own poetic, Heaney's journey is once again constructed as a Sweeney-like affair. Christ's invitation in the poem to 'follow me' is accompanied by the 'visitation' of a marvellous bird which translates Christ's injunction into the pagan injunction of Sweeney/Heaney called upon to renounce the comforts and securities of home for the discomforts of the inward journey and the artistic life of exile.

Ultimately, the paradoxical journey of the modern into the archaic leads to a vision of a subterranean prehistoric site at a depth far below the topsoil he digs into at the outset of his poetry in 'Digging' :

> I would migrate
> through a high cave mouth
> into an oaten, sun-warmed cliff,
>
> on down the soft-nubbed
> clay-floored passage,
> face-brush, wing-flap,
> to the deepest chamber.

Heaney is in subjunctive mood here, replaying through the strata of his own poetic text the descent through geology and history, alluvial muds of the Liffey and Bann clay to an original point which his poetic ultimately cannot scale:

> For my book of changes
> I would meditate
> that stone-faced vigil
>
> until that long dumbfounded
> spirit broke cover
> to raise a dust
> in the font of exhaustion.
>
> The holy vessel of poetry emptied.

The poem imagines a book of changes which records by its very loss an original archaic spirit. It is a lack recorded in the later poems of Part One coded in the stones of archaism as in 'An Aisling in the Burren':

> That day the clatter of stones
> as we climbed was a sermon
> on conscience and healing.

The archaic, rocky terrain of the Burren in County Clare is given symbolically as the 'site of catastrophe' where Gaelic language and consciousness were separated from culture and geography, the narrative ground of Heaney's *dinnseanchas* and Friel's *Translations*.

'Sheelagh na Gig' is also a sermon in stones of the decline of an archaic sensibility. Contemplating her icon on the wall of a Norman church, her status as Celtic and pre-Celtic fertility goddess and her weight-bearing posture mythically renders her in Heaney's mind as founder and bearer of primitive Celtic civilisation and culture, 'she bears the whole stone burden'. Heaney acknowledges that her primal, agrarian meaning has diminished in modern forms of life and consciousness,: 'She is twig-boned, saddle-sexed,/ grown-up, grown ordinary'. The stone constructs her strength and the primal feelings which endure at the margin of modern history and culture.

The rook and tower of 'The Master' emblematise both the visionary and the vision of a powerful archaic primitivism which has precedence in *Buile Suibhne* and the poetry of W.B. Yeats who lived in a building he named Thuadhr Ballylee where he wrote a monumental poetic work, *The Tower*, out of the ethos and associations connected with the archaic stone tower. In an essay tribute to W. B. Yeats entitled 'Yeats' Nobility', Heaney praises his predecessor's artistic mastery in terms of the solidity and strength of the tower at Ballylee: 'Yeats in Ballylee is a figure of the poet imagining the last ditch. Fortified by the stone, in both a physical and a literary way'.[16] A notional stone structure, the tower, 'symbolises the solid structures of art into which poetic flight is converted'.[17] Language and text are rendered within metaphors of stone and of building construction in order to register the text itself as an object with its own autonomous substance and volume. Only vestigially present in the physical landscape, the stone tower in Heaney's poetic serves as icon in the cultural landscape which can stand visibly alongside the iconic language structures of Church and Factory. 'The Master' is a poem made up of

linguistic signs which gesture at their own power to reinvocate repressed mythologies and histories.

Parable Island

Alan Robinson notes the linguistic self-consciousness of the subsequent volume, *The Haw Lantern*: 'His self-interrogation now extends to his writing also, the naive linguistic exuberance of his first collections has been replaced by a deconstructive self-consciousness'.[18] 'Alphabets' is a retrospective upon the poet's socialisation into an established hierarchical linguistic order managed through systems of education and writing. The forked 'Y' represents the split in sensibility and in culture that writing itself generates: 'Then draws the forked stick they call a Y. This is writing'. Then there is a 'right' and 'wrong' way to hold a pen, and 'copying out' of prescribed paradigms is followed by '"English"/Marked correct', offering an imagery of the poet as a child innocent 'of the knowledge that signs are culturally inscribed'.[19] Through his subsequent education, however, the boy becomes acquainted with a diversity of languages and literatures and educational institutions. In a paradigm similar to that which Foucault theorises, Heaney comes to understand the fact that Ireland and the larger world is socially and historically constructed by cultural and linguistic sign-systems, the minatory Latin, the intimate and sensory Celtic calligraphy 'that felt like home', a Christian script and the English language.

Language and chirographic reconstruction are imbricated in radical forms of epistemological and social displacement. To a young boy, the globe, a sphere on which a map of the world is drawn, is a territorial and epistemological icon present but uncomprehended. Later, Heaney stands in the globe theatre, a lecturer, referring to the Globe and to Shakespeare, an index of familiarity with the larger world beyond his own locale and with transformative histories of culture and modernity. The intimate farm life of his youth has been displaced by modern farm

technologies while the boy has been reconstructed by modern systems of communications and its concomitant alphabet: 'Balers drop bales like printouts where stooked sheaves/ Made lambdas on the stubble once at harvest/ And the delta face of each potato pit'. Heaney's origins have been liquidated by the flow of modern forms of progress, technological, communicational and representational: 'All gone, with the omega that kept/ Watch above each door'.

The poem closes with an image of the poet as astronaut viewing the world from an orbiting capsule who now 'sees all he has sprung from,/ The risen, aqueous, singular, lucent O/ Like a magnified and buoyant ovum '. Heaney's dialectic of dwelling and detachment from place has been consistently marked by his perceptual view of locale from behind windows of the study, the writing rooms, the car. The holistic, grand perspective from within the satellite is relative to his innocent and amazed pre-literate and 'pre-reflective stare' at the plasterer's writing of the Heaney's name on the gable-end, 'letter by strange letter', representing the displacement from a subjective immersion in locale, to a condition of *ostranenie*, a personal self-conscious modernistic detachment from a place which no longer exists in its original form.

Like Friel's alter-ego, Michael, in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Heaney here remembers the dramatic changes in his own lifetime, from natural, rural and residual pagan to something deeply technological and chirographic which have reconstructed him. 'From the Frontier of Writing' records in the transit across the Northern Irish border a rites of passage across the frontier of speech-censorship into the realm of a freed speech, recalling his own migration across the border recorded in 'Exposure'(*N*). The actual crossing is recorded in a simile of the car, passed from 'behind a waterfall/ on the black current of a tarmac road', the soldiers receding in the reflected distance 'like tree shadows into the polished windscreen'. The passage suggests Heaney's journey is into and within a technical modernity, his writing contingent on that material formation. The reflection of the Ulster territory

in the windscreen calls forth Heaney's movement into a modern representational imaginary which no longer has an objective referential world but is dependent on its own signifying system of language and literature. The language of the poetry is no longer coextensive with territory, it disappears into a discursive realm no longer specular, rather it is a simulacrum of sorts, the text produced from matrices of other texts and its appropriate orders of discourse.

'Parable Island' in *The Haw Lantern* acknowledges the 'slippery relativism of all (mytho) graphic attempts to reduce society and the environment to discursive control'.[20] The shifts in language registered in 'Alphabets', Gaelic, Latin, English, and the propensity of the story-telling island to speak through myth and to constantly rewrite history, reappear as a condition of 'Parable Island'. In the Celtic Christian record of a pagan past 'you can't be sure that parable is not/ at work already retrospectively'. It is thus impossible to discern an original 'autochthonous tradition', what Robinson calls in a Derridean reading of the poem the 'primal authority of transcendental signified anterior to the refractions of language'.[21] The recurrent glosses are part of the modern condition, the burrowing historians of prose and poetry are 'archaeologists' who 'gloss the glosses', inscribing the past through the lens of their own ideologies: 'To one school, the stone circles are pure symbol;/ to another, assembly spots or hut foundations'.

Heaney is now actively deconstructive of his own glossing of *Buile Suibhne* which 'The First Gloss' records. It is hegemony that is at stake in the discourses of the island history, with the poem's language implying the contest that takes place, for example, between nationalist and unionist versions of Ireland's story: 'the subversives and collaborators/ always vying with a fierce possessiveness/ for the right to set "the island story" straight'. The representation of the Celtic Christian scribes as 'old revisionists' who 'derive/ the word *island* from roots in *eye* and *land*', figures the biased eye of ideology and hegemony encoding the territory in its own image.

The Mud Vision

'The Mud Vision' deploys a magic realism to evoke the neurosis of a people reconstructed by modernity in technological and communicational forms. 'We sleepwalked/ The line between panic and formulae' submits Heaney, a sublimation created by a consciousness textured by beliefs in the Crucifixion and transubstantiation, reverence for the Pope and steeped in the parochialism of rural life, but embedded in an advanced capitalist and urban modernity of satellites, jet planes, helicopters, film and TV and graffiti-spraying punks: 'Statues with exposed hearts and barbed-wire crowns/ Still stood in alcoves, hares flitted beneath/ The dozing bellies of jests.../ Satellite link-ups/ Wafted over us the blessings of popes'.

In the early poems of *Wintering Out*, especially in 'The Last Mummer', where the people ignore their own cultural inheritance and sit passively in front of a television screen, Heaney expressed his potential to evoke the condition of a people caught between a rural, pre-technological and a postmodern state of consciousness. Now in 'A Mud Vision' he returns to that pathology, the revelation of a mud vision could be of the order of reality associated with moving statues or of an apocalyptic order of nuclear or volcanic explosion and fall-out, popularly interpreted as 'biblical portents' and 'eschatological omens'[22] of second-coming proportions. The 'drivers on the hard shoulder', large with expectation, switch off engines to witness 'the rainbow/ Curved flood-brown'. But the vision and the possibility of an older covenant fade as 'the miraculous is subject to rational analysis':[23] 'cameras raked/ The site from every angle, experts/ Began their *post-factum* jabber'.

The empirical gaze of the theodolite witnessed in the historical drama, *Translations*, has evolved to the empirical gaze of the camera. The media and its voluble chatter sacrifices sensory experience and sensual being to an empirical profligacy which strips the inner sensorium bare. It constitutes an alarming form of dispossession: 'we forgot that the vision was ours,/ Our one chance to know the

incomparable/ And dive to a future. What might have been origin/ We dissipated in news'.

Heaney is now turning the *camera obscura* on the camera itself. The irony of 'A Shooting Script' is that the modern written and filmic medium, which fascinatingly produces a retrospective of the decline of the Gaelic language, obscures its own technological heritage within the very modernity which penetrated and eroded that Gaelic social and linguistic system. The film shot presented in the poem represents the historical fate of the Gaelic language, its promise and still-birth in the newly independent Irish Free State of the 1920s. A Catholic priest and a freeze of his blank face suggests the cryogenic internal source of a language's failure to renew itself. Then the film, the modern media, dominating the oral Gaelic language exhibits 'Tracking shots of a long wave up a strand/ That breaks towards the point of a stick writing and writing/ Words in the old script in the running sand'. The poem registers the historical erasure of the Gaelic language, the stick writing of an archaic script which precedes the rationalist typography and technology of the Enlightenment.[24] The long wave is also the camera, the film itself, as representative of the modernity which wipes the slate clean of the Irish language which depicts, like the community in *Translations*, a people living in the modern world under the sign of erasure. Just as the Gaelic language and the mud-vision fade, so in 'The Disappearing Island' does the island-life premised on prayer and vigil, and a world-view centred on the hearth and a cauldron hung 'like a firmament'. The island breaks like the language in a wave, a dissolving vision which also countenances the end of the poet's own vision of the physical aspects of place.

The Placeless Heaven

Robinson notes that Heaney's 'purgatorial court is in session frequently in *The Haw lantern*'.[25] The title poem adverts back to the comet of imaginative

revelation 'like a glimmer of haws and rose-hips' in 'Exposure' at the close of *North* where the poet anxiously deliberates a missed opportunity to evolve his Ulster-based poetry. Under the scrutiny of the cynic philosopher, Diogenes, the poet flinches with a guilt that militates against a favourable judgement and a purification rite, 'you flinch before its bonded pith and stone,/ its blood-prick that you wish would test and clear you'. The debris trailing from the uprooted tree of home in 'The Wishing Tree', 'streaming from it like a comet-tail' represents the detritus of Heaney's Ulster past being cast off. The sight in 'The Spoonbait' of 'A shooting star going back up./ It flees him and it burns him all at once' suggests the final reckoning of the 'missed/...once-in-a-lifetime portent' ('Exposure'), the painful acknowledgement of a poetic as well as political opportunity in decline flares one final time. From the distance of the Republic and the many years away from home the poet casts his own judgement upon the amoral realm of Ulster violence in 'The Song of the Bullets'. Moral justice is negated by the bullet which insists that violence and murder is as immanent to mankind as nature and reproduction, such that 'Justice stands aghast and stares/ Like the sun on arctic snow'. The cadences of the soul, implying Heaney's lyric poetry, is a futile force in the face of the 'iron will' of a mankind that hoops and coopers, moulds and glazes worlds through the amoral virtue of the bullet: 'We fire and glaze the shape of things/ Until the shape's imposed'.

In 'Hailstones', the memory of the sudden halt of a stinging hailstorm in his childhood acts as an emblematic moment for his life forty years on: 'there you had/ the truest foretaste of your aftermath-'. The ceased violence, 'something whipped and knowledgeable/ had withdrawn', and the stark quiet amid the pure white of the hailstones, represents the release from the imposed and internalised social discipline and a guilt-ridden pain. The poetry is the passage through, and the thaw of hail the melting of pain, 'I made a small hard ball/ of burning water running from my hand/ just as I made this [poem] now/ out of the melt of the real thing/ smarting into its

absence'. The tracks of his modern poetic journey represent the divesting of the pain: 'in that dilation/ when the light opened in silence/ and a car with wipers going still/ laid perfect tracks in the slush'.

The journey through the infernal regions of history and self, the subsequent purgatorial and purification rites of *Sweeney Astray*, 'Station Island' and the purgatorial courts of *The Haw Lantern* completed, Heaney begins to direct his gaze heavenwards. In 'The First Flight' in *Station Island* Heaney remembers his early poetry up to *North* as one 'mired in attachment' to the homelands of Mossbawn. In the retrospective upon the bird-man, Sweeney comes not only to represent Heaney's flight from Ulster but also convey the spiritual uplift of a soul mired in Ulster ground. Elmer Andrews notes in 'The Spirit's Protest' the poet's powers of transcendence which the imaginative retrospective of 'A Waking Dream' in *Station Island* portrays, evoking the lift out of the intimate mire of culture and up into the transcendental air: 'I was lofted/ beyond exerted breath, the cheep and blur/ of trespass and occurrence./ As if one who had dropped off came to/ suspecting the very stillness of the sunlight'.

'In the Chestnut Tree'(*SI*) initiates a symbolic narrative of transcending roots in order to aspire to a heavenly state of a grace which is of the self rather than of God. Heaney refers to a chestnut tree that was planted by his maternal aunt in Mossbawn in the year of the poet's birth. Over the years the tree came to symbolise the affection of his aunt and he came to 'identify' his own life 'with the life of that chestnut tree'.[26] In his account of the tree in 'The Placeless Heaven: Another Look at Patrick Kavanagh' in *The Government of the Tongue*, Heaney asserts that the tree was chopped down by the subsequent owners of the Mossbawn farm and that from his previous perception of the tree as a living symbol for being rooted in the native ground, 'all of a sudden, a couple of years ago, I began to think of the space where the tree had been or would have been'.[27] The poet professes that 'in my mind's eye I saw it as a kind of luminous emptiness, a warp and waver

of light...I began to identify with that space just as years before I had identified with the young tree'.[28] From being a symbol of native rootedness, this emergent image is explained by the poet as a preparation for a final mental and spiritual uprooting from Mossbawn:

> ...to be spirited away into some transparent, yet indigenous afterlife. The new place was all idea, if you like; it was generated out of my experience of the old place but it was not a topographical location. It was and remains an imagined realm, even if it can be located at an earthly spot, a placeless heaven, rather than a heavenly place.[29]

'In the Chestnut', the tree is a matronly queen which ominously contains 'the little bird of death/ piping and piping somewhere/ in her gorgeous tackling', coincidental with the preparation for his aunt's death and his own rite of spiritual uprooting.

In 'Clearances', the sonnet sequence in *The Haw Lantern* upon his mother's death, Heaney charts an Oedipal rite of passage in which his masculinity and identity rooted in his mother is also released into the air with his mother's soul. In sonnet eight the original place, Mossbawn, which filled him up with meaning has been in the course of his poetry excoriated and with the death of his mother become vacant in its meaning: 'I thought of walking round and round a space/ Utterly empty, utterly a source/ Where the decked chestnut tree had lost its place/ In our front hedge above the wallflowers'. This is the decisive move into Heaney's placeless heaven rendered in a symbolism of the chestnut tree being felled: 'Its heft and hush becomes a bright nowhere,/ A soul ramifying and forever/ Silent, beyond silence listened for'. His poetry rooted throughout in the Mossbawn matrix, the maternal foundation of culture and of his own poetry, is now uprooted with the mother's disappearance from that earth.

'The Wishing Tree' which follows picks up the same theme. The poet thinks of his mother as 'the wishing tree that died/ And saw it lifted, root and branch, to heaven,/ Trailing a shower of all that had been driven'. This vision represents the mother as the matrix of sexuality, desire and creativity, ascending to a Catholic heaven and Heaney's own poetic soul now floats like Kavanagh's did

'above his native domain, airborne in the midst of his own dream place' rather than earthbound in a literal field.[30] Having done his penance the poet ascends to what is the 'placeless heaven' of the Self which Heaney observes in Kavanagh's poem, 'Auditors In':

> From the sour soil of a town where all roots canker
> I turn away to where the Self reposes
> The placeless Heaven that's under all our noses
> Where we're shut off from all the barren anger
> ...I am so glad
> To come accidentally upon
> My self at the end of a tortuous road
> And have learned with surprise that God
> Unworshipped withers to the Futile One.

Heaney transcends the anchoring and repressive feminine attachments to Mossbawn and the Christian abstractions that apply there and discovers a sacred self.

The Souls of the Faithful Departed

A number of poems in *The Haw Lantern* show the soul departing the earth, not only his mother's soul but also in 'The Summer of Lost Rachel' that of the woman Rachel, fatally killed by a car in the month of May, indexing the death of the marian, feminine folk culture of Ireland by a triumphant modernity. Charting the death of a specific form of relation to physical place and the entrée into a more transcendent spiritual relation to the world, a number of poems enact rites of passage across wordly thresholds: for example in the passage of the mortal soul of the old Anglo-Saxon king Scyld from *Beowulf* in 'The Ship of Death' who has 'crossed over into Our Lord's keeping' and 'In Memoriam Robert Fitzgerald' where the journeying archaeologist's soul passes through doorway after megalithic doorway 'out of all knowing'.

Seeing Things is also a volume of unburdenings and lightenings and distinctly plots the rites of his father's death and his passage into the afterlife. The volume begins by drawing a correspondence between Aeneas about to enter the Classical Underworld and the poet about to confront the shade of his father.

Heaney has said in an interview with Melvyn Bragg that his father was almost mythological in his proportions.[31] Certainly in the early poem 'Follower', Heaney attributes his ploughman-father the dimensions of a mythical archetype, 'His shoulders globed like a full sail strung/ Between the shafts and the furrow', whose presence dogs the adult poet: 'But today/ It is my father who keeps stumbling/ Behind me, and will not go away'. In the third of the 'Seeing Things' trilogy, Heaney enacts a *deja-vu* scenario of the shade of his father. Recalling the shock of an occasion when his father almost drowned, he articulates the ghostlike aftermath of his father's presence, 'his ghosthood immanent', walking towards the young Heaney 'With his damp footprints out of the river'. 'The Ash Plant', '1.1.87' and 'An August Night' are poems which deal directly with his father's illness and death, his father's walking stick representing the spirit of his father which the son, Seamus, has inherited.

Yet, ultimately, the celebrations of his father in death are muted. 'The Pitchfork' represents the heroic status of Heaney's agrarian father, the implement is inaugurated as an emblem of father's fleet lightness of touch. But in lyric thirty three in 'Crossings' the design and build of his father's house ambivalently invokes the ascetic, puritanical values his father lived by: 'Plain, big, straight, ordinary you now,/ A paradigm of rigour and correction,/ Rebuke to fanciness and shrine to limit'. The departure represents an unburdening of the large man's presence in his life and releases the poet from his parental roots in Mossbawn.

The Seventh Heaven

With the burdens of his guilt-ridden departure from place and the dissolution of his parental contact with Mossbawn he is now able to transcend his place of origin. Heaney has commented upon the possibility of linking the title to such an idea of brightening and lightening: 'I knew the book was going to be called maybe *Lightenings* - but I felt lightening was maybe a dangerous title. It seemed so

simple, so throwaway and so visionary at the same time'.[32] At the close of 'Fosterling', Heaney finds a correlative for an Irish form of light which is at once local and transcendent: 'Me waiting until I was nearly fifty/ To credit marvels. Like the tree-clock of tin cans The tinkers made. So long for air to brighten,/ Time to be dazzled and the air to lighten'. This memory-poem represents a reworking of a Newtonian universe within the stranger, more magical universe of the itinerant tinker.

Lightenings is picked up thematically in the volume in its connotations as epiphany, as an unburdening, as pyrotechnic flash and is enunciated as a key idea in the sequence of twelve poems that have the name 'Lightenings' attributed to them. Heaney recollects the mood of penitential journey that he makes through *Sweeney Astray*, *Station Island* and *The Cure at Troy* and the unburdening transcendence that occurs: 'Shifting brilliancies', the epiphanies of the journey, take on the hue of a 'winter light' where 'the particular judgement might be set:/ Bare wallstead and a cold hearth rained into-/ Bright puddle where the soul-free cloud-life roams'. This is the retrospective upon the 'commanded journey' which has so cooled the poet's emotional immersion in place and which 'Lightenings' now acknowledges as completed.

The motif of epiphany which marks the journey is a constant point of reference in the sequence. Illumination is anticipated in the young boy who 'squinted out from a skylight of the world' and the young artist, Thomas Hardy whose 'small cool brow was like an anvil waiting/ For sky to make it sing the perfect pitch'. In the buoyancy of the man speaking with and to the crowd, the luminary epiphanic experience along the poetic journey is presented: 'How airy it felt up there,/ Bare to the world, light-headed, volatile', while the 'cargoed brightness' of the quarry boat characterises the luminary poetic freight. The otherworldly disposition of the crewman who steps out of a ship of the air into the element of the real characterises the strangeness of the journey and, finally, in the

twelfth lyric, 'And lightenings? One meaning of that/ Beyond the usual sense of alleviation/ Illumination...[is]...A phenomenal instant when the spirit flares'. This late condition of a transgressive, outlawed, poet's soul on its journey to the transcendent is exemplified by the commendation by Christ on the cross of the thief's soul to heaven: '*This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*'

'Squarings' self-consciously acknowledges that mind is composed of trace elements of the past: 'The places I go back to have not failed/ But will not last...The very currents memory is composed of'. This represents Heaney's late form of subjectivity as constituted by a transcended self rather than by a man physically located in place. In Heaney's world of reverie in 'The Settle Bed' there is 'a far-seeing joker posted high above the fog' who by the time he returns to the ship down below finds it has been stolen away - on the return home after exile, not only has the poet changed but so has the place. Evolving the imagery of 'Underground' where Heaney retraces the stones of memory, Heaney uses the track of the hare to speak about the memory deposits in mind which have become their own referents divorced from origin: 'Choose one set of tracks and track a hare/ Until the prints stop, just like that, in snow./ End of the line. Smooth drifts. Where did she go? /...Back on her tracks, of course'. Heaney records that the past is 'All gone into the world of light ', dispersed by the departure of those who have physically migrated and those who have crossed into the afterlife. The departed and displaced poetic soul of Heaney which casts its spoonbait into the stream of memory to lure out glimmerings of the past eventually loses touch with its own former existence: 'That moment of admission of *All gone.* /When the rod butt loses touch'.

Heaney's final resting place in *Seeing Things* is 'seventh heaven' where the 'whole truth of a sense come to pass', imagined as 'the offing', a luminary space containing knowledges of a former existence exhausted by departure and its constant reworking in a poetry of memory and by the death of his mother and his father. In the words of Yeats which Heaney cites, 'The soul recovers a radical innocence,/

And learns at last that it is self-delighting./ Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,/ And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will', an accomplished renegotiation with place which Heaney says Rilke has expressed in a single simple command: "You must change your life".

'The Schoolbag' travels back forty years to record fundamental change. The poem remembers 'a child on his first morning leaving his parents'. Given this context, a post-colonial reading of Heaney's later poetic and social locations might see the cleansing and transcendence as an ordering of an Arnoldian 'better self'. Able on the one hand to dwell in the free play of the imagination, education has left Heaney socially orphaned and deracinated. A man freed of local particulars and relocated in a transcendent domain of the self, he assumes culturally-centred patriarchal roles as Professor of Poetry at the old cultural heart of the British Empire, Oxford University, and Boylston Professor of Oratory and Rhetoric at Harvard, a powerful institution in the new imperial cultural hegemony of America. The poet's learning and literary prowess ultimately prove a double-edged sword and leaves Heaney still a double man, an exemplar of the trials and tribulations within western culture in the late-twentieth-century, his material conditions problematic, his metaphysics uncertain. This is the predicament that faces the itinerant Gerry in Friel's drama *Dancing at Lughnasa* where the man, uprooted from his local place reflects 'Maybe that's the important thing for a man: a *named* destination- democracy, Ballybeg, heaven'.

1. Seamus Heaney, 'Preface', *Ugolino*, by Andrew Carpenter (Dublin, 1979), n.p..

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3. Tony Curtis, 'A More Social Voice: *Field Work*', in *The Art of Seamus Heaney*, pp.99-127 (p.124).

4. Neil Corcoran, *Seamus Heaney*, p.158.

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6. Thomas C. Foster, *Seamus Heaney*, p.126.

7. Blake Morrison, *Seamus Heaney*, p.78.

8. Melvyn Bragg, 'Interview', *Start The Week*, Radio 4, 3 June 1991.

9. Neil Corcoran, p.157.

10. Elmer Andrews, p.178.

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15. Elmer Andrews, p.178.

16. Seamus Heaney, 'Yeats' Nobility', *Fortnight: A Yeats Supplementary* (1989), II-III (p.III).

17. Elmer Andrews, p.180.

18. Alan Robinson, 'Seamus Heaney: the Free State of Image and Allusion', in *Instabilities in Contemporary British Poetry*, pp.123-60 (p.149). This reading of the poem is indebted to Robinson's analysis of 'Alphabets'.

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27. 'The Placeless Heaven', p.3.

28. 'The Placeless Heaven', p.3.

29. 'The Placeless Heaven', p.4.

30. 'The Placeless Heaven', p.13.

31. Melvyn Bragg, *Start the Week.*

32. Melvyn Bragg, *The South Bank Show*, BBC1, 31 October 1991.

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The bibliography is compiled in accordance with the *Modern Humanities Research Association Style Book*. It is divided into four sections: the first two deal with the works of Seamus Heaney and Brian Friel each of which is subdivided into primary and secondary sources and listed in chronological and alphabetical order, respectively. The third section catalogues references to Irish writing and culture and the fourth section lists general theory and criticism, both in an alphabetic notation. Only works cited in the main text are registered, except for some exceptions where the material has been considered essential reading.

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